













**THE  
INDIAN LECTURES OF  
SWAMI VIVEKANANDA**

**BEING A RECORD OF HIS ADDRESSES IN INDIA  
AFTER HIS MISSION TO THE WEST.**



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## THE PUBLISHER'S PREFACE.

"The Indian Lectures of the late Swami Vivekananda" is a collection of his speeches delivered in the year 1897, in reply to addresses of welcome offered to him by his compatriots, at different places, in India, which he visited after his return from the West. It is here offered anew to the reading public in an edition where an effort has been made to revise the book completely on comparing it with the first published newspaper reports of the lectures, that is, with such of them as are available now. The marginal notes have been altered in some places to suit the context. A few word-notes and most of the important passages from the Sanskrit, originally quoted, have also been subjoined to make the import clear to all and sundry.

*September, 1922.*



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# INDIAN LECTURES OF SWAMI VIVEKANANDA

ON THE GREAT MISSION OF INDIA.

(ADDRESS DELIVERED AT COLOMBO).

What little work has been done, has been due, not to any inherent power residing in me, but the cheer, the good-will, the blessings, that followed me on my path in the West from this our sacred and most beloved Mother-land. Some good has been done, no doubt, but that especially to myself, for what before was but a personal opinion, has now gained the conviction of certainty, has now attained the power and strength of demonstration. Before I left India, I thought that this was *Punya Bhumi*, the land of *Karma*. To-day I stand here to say, with conviction, that it is so, that if there is any land on this earth that can lay claim above all others to be the blessed *Punya Bhumi*, the land to which all must sooner or later, come, to account for their *Karma*, the land to which every soul that is wending its way Godward must come to attain its perfection, the land where humanity has developed farthest towards gentleness, generosity, purity, and calm, the

India is  
*Punya*  
*Bhumi*, the  
land of  
*Karma*.

land above all of introspection and of spirituality, it is India. Here, from most ancient times, have been born the founders of religion, deluging the earth again and again with the pure and perennial waters of spiritual truth. Here have begun those tidal waves of philosophy that have traversed oceans, East and West, North and South, and now here again must rise that wave which is to spiritualise the material civilization of the modern world. Here are the life-giving waters with which shall be quenched the burning fire of materialism that is consuming the hearts of millions in other lands. Believe me, my friends, this is yet to be.

So far I think I have seen ; so far those of you who are already students of the history of races are aware also. The debt which the world owes to this our mother-land is immense. Taking country with country there is not one race on this earth to which the world owes so much as to that of the patient Hindu, the mild Hindu. "The mild Hindu" is a phrase sometimes used as an expression of reproach, but if ever such concealed a wonderful truth it is here. For the "mild Hindu" has been the blessed child of God always. Civilizations have arisen in other parts of the world. In ancient and modern times alike, great ideas have emanated from strong races. In ancient and modern times ideas have been carried forward from one race to another. In ancient and modern times the seeds of truth and power have been cast abroad by the advancing tides of national

"The mild Hindu" not a reproach ; its meaning :

life, but mark, my friends, it has been always with the blast of war trumpets, and with the march of embattled cohorts. Each idea had to be soaked in a deluge of blood ; each idea had to advance on the blood of millions of our fellow beings, each word of power had to be followed by the groans of millions, by the wails of orphans, by the tears of widows. Such in the main has been the method of other nations. But India has existed for thousands of years. Here was activity when as yet Greece was not, when Rome had not been thought of, when the fathers of modern Europeans themselves lived in the German forests and painted themselves blue. Even earlier, in a past of which history has no record, and into which tradition dares not peep, began the march of ideas out from India. But every word from here, was spoken with blessings behind it, and peace before it. We of all the nations of the world have never been conquerors, and because the blessing of this is upon us, do we live. There was a time when at the march of great Greek battalions the earth trembled. They are vanished now from the face of the earth. There was a time when the Roman eagle floated over everything worth having in this world ; everywhere went Rome, trampling on the head of humanity ; the earth trembled at the name of Rome. But the Capitoline Hill is a mass of ruins now, the spider weaves its web where Cæsars ruled. Other nations equally glorious have come and gone seizing a few hours of exultant and exuberant domination, and of

The Hindus  
not a  
conquering  
race.

boisterous national life, and then vanishing like ripples on the face of the ocean.

In such fashion have these others made their mark on the face of humanity. But you so live, that if Manu came back to-day, he would not be astonished, would not find himself in a foreign land. The same laws rule us still, laws adjusted and thought out through thousands and thousands of years, customs the outcome of the experience of centuries, that seem to be eternal; and as the days have gone by, the blows of misfortune that have been delivered upon them, seem only to have served the purpose of making them stronger and more enduring. And the centre of all this, the heart from which the blood flows, the main-spring of the national life lies, believe me, in one simple fact. To the other nations of the world religion is but one among the many interests of life. They have politics, they have the enjoyments of social life, they have all that wealth can buy, and power can bring. They have all that the senses can enjoy, and among all these various pleasures and searching after more, to give a little more edge to the cloyed appetites—among all this, there is also a little bit of religion. But here, in India, religion is the one and the only occupation of life. That there has been a Chino-Japanese war, how many of you know? Very few, if any. That there are tremendous political movements and socialistic movements trying to transform Western society, how many of you know? Very few, if any. But that

Religion is  
the main-  
spring of  
national  
life

there was a Parliament of Religions in America, that there was a Hindu Sannyasin sent over there, I am astonished to find even the cooly knows. That shows the way the wind blows, shows where the national life is. I have read many books written by globe-trotting travellers who wail at the ignorance of the Eastern masses, but I have found out that this is at once true and untrue. You see a Western ploughman in England, or America, or Germany. Ask him what party he belongs to, and he can tell you whether he is a Radical or a Conservative, and for whom he is going to vote. In America he knows whether he is Republican or Democrat, and even something about the silver question. But ask him about his religion. That he goes to church, is all he knows. That he goes to church, and perhaps that his father belonged to a certain denomination. No more.

Come to India, and take one of our ploughmen. "Do you know anything about politics?" "What is that?" he says. He does not understand the socialistic movements, the relation between capital and labour. He never heard of such things in his life. He works hard, and earns his bread; what more? But "What is your religion?" "Why look, my friend! I have marked it on my fore-head?" He can give me a good hint or two on questions of devotion. That has been my experience. This is our nation's life. As individuals have each their own peculiarities, so has each his own method of growth, his own life marked out for him, as we



Hindus would say, by his infinite past life, by all his past *Karma* ; because in this world, the infinite past ushers in the present, and the way in which we use the present will determine the future. Thus, everyone who is born has a bent, a direction in which he must go, a destiny through which he must live, and what is true of the individual is equally true of the race. Each race, similarly, has a peculiar bent, each race has a peculiar *raison d'être*, each race has a mission of its own to fulfil in the life of the world. Each race has to work out its own result, to fulfil its own errand. Political greatness or military power, was never the mission of our race ; it never was, and, mark my words, never will be. But there has been the other mission given to us,—to conserve, to preserve, to accumulate, as it were in a dynamo, all the spiritual energy of Humanity, and that concentrated energy is to pour forth in a deluge on the world whenever circumstances are propitious. Let the Persian and the Greek, the Roman and the Arab, or the modern Englishman march his battalions, conquer the world, and link the different nations together, and the philosophy and spirituality of India will prove itself ready to flow along these new-made channels into the veins of the nations of the world. The calm Hindu's brain must pour out its own quota to the sum total of human progress. India's gift to the world is the light spiritual.

Thus, we read in the past history that whenever there arose a great conquering nation uniting the

different races of the world, binding India with the other races, taking her out, as it were, from her loneliness, from her aloofness from the rest of the world into which she again and again cast herself, wherever such a thing was brought about, the result was the flooding of the world with Indian spiritual ideas. At the beginning of this century, Schopenhauer, the great German philosopher, studying from a not very clear translation of the Vedas made from an old translation into Persian, and thence by a young Frenchman into Latin, says "There has been no study in the world, excepting in the original, so ennobling as that of Upanishads. These have been the solace of my life ; these will be the solace of my death," and then this great German sage foretold that "The world is about to see a revolution in thought more extensive and more powerful than that which was witnessed by the Renaissance of Greek literature," and to-day his predictions are coming to pass. Those who keep their eyes open, those who understand the workings in the minds of the different nations of the West, those who are, thinkers and study the different nations, will find the immense change that has been produced in the tone, the procedure, in the methods, and in the literature of the world by this slow, never-ceasing permeation of Indian thought. But there is another peculiarity as I have already hinted to you: We never preached our thoughts with fire and sword. If there is one word in the English language to represent the gift of

of Indian  
thought in  
the past;

India unto the world, if there is one word in the English language to style the effect which the literature of India produces upon mankind, it is this one word "fascination." It is the opposite of anything that takes you suddenly, throws on you, as it were, a charm all of a sudden. To many, Indian thought, Indian manners, Indian customs, Indian philosophy, Indian literature, are repulsive at the first sight, but let them persevere, let them read, let them become familiar with the great principles underlying these ideas, and it is ninety-nine to one that the charm will be upon them, fascination will be the result. Slowly and silently, as the gentle dew that falls in the morning, unseen, unheard, yet producing a most tremendous result, has been the work of this calm, patient, all-suffering, spiritual race upon the world of thought.

**in the future.** Once more history is about to repeat itself, for to-day, under the fierce light of modern science, when old, apparently strong and invulnerable beliefs have been shaken to their very foundations, when the special claims laid by different sects upon the allegiance of mankind have all been blown to atoms and vanished into air—when the sledge-hammer blows of modern antiquarian researches are pulverising all sorts of antiquated orthodoxies like masses of porcelain—when religion in the West is only in the hands of the ignorant, and the intelligent look down with scorn on everything belonging to it, here comes the philosophy of India, here comes the

highest religious aspirations of the mind of India, where the grandest philosophical facts have been the practical spirituality of the people. This is coming naturally to the rescue, the oneness of all, the immense Infinite, the idea of the Impersonal, the wonderful idea of the eternal soul of man, of the unbroken continuity in the march of beings, the infinity of the universe. For our old sects looked upon the world as a little mud puddle, and thought that time began but the other day. There and only there, in our old books, and throughout our history was the grand idea governing all the search for religion, the infinite range of time, space and causation, and above all the infinite glory of the spirit of man. When the modern tremendous theories of evolution and conservation of energy and so forth are dealing death blows to all sorts of crude theologies, what can hold any more the allegiance of cultured humanity but these most convincing, broadening, and ennobling ideas, that can only be found in that most marvellous product of the soul of man, the wonderful voice of God, the Vedānta.

At the same time I must remark that what I mean by our religion working upon the nations outside of India is only the principles, the back-ground, the foundation upon which that religion is built. The detailed workings, the minute points which have been worked out through centuries of social necessity, little ratiocinations about manners and customs and social well-being, do not rightly find a place in

The eternal principles of Hinduism distinguished from the ever-changing minor laws

the category of religion. We know, at the same time, that what our books lay down in these respects is only for the time being, for we find there a clear distinction made between the two sets of truths, the one which abides for ever, and is built upon the very nature of man and the universe, as for example—the nature of the soul, the soul's relation to God, the nature of God, perfection, or the principles of cosmology, of the infinitude of creation, how that it is no creation but the wonderful law of the cyclical procession, and so on, things that are eternal principles founded upon facts which are universal in nature, while there is the other set of truths, the minor laws, more properly belonging to the Puranas, to the Smritis, and not to the Srutis, guiding the working of our everyday life. These have nothing to do with the other, the former set of things. Even in our own time these have been changing. Customs of one age, of one *yuga*, have not been the customs of another, and as *yuga* comes after *yuga*, they will still have to change. Great Rishis will appear and lead us into the new manners and customs that are suited to such new environment.

The former  
do not  
change

The great principles underlying all this wonderful, infinite, ennobling, expansive view of man, and God, and the world, have been produced in India, and in India alone man did not stand up and fight for a little tribal God. "My God is true and yours is not true ; let us have a good fight over it." It was only here that such ideas did not occur. These

great underlying principles being based upon the eternal nature of man are as potent to-day for the working out of the good of the human race as they were thousands of years ago, and they will remain so long as this earth remains, so long as the law of *Karma* remains, so long as we are born as individuals and have to work out our own destiny by our individual power.

And above all, what India has to give to the world is this. If we watch the growth and development of religions in different races, we shall always find this, that each tribe at the beginning has a god of its own. If the tribes are allied to each other these gods will have a generic name, as that of all the Babylonian gods for example. When the Babylonians were divided into many tribes they had the generic name of Baal for their Gods, just as the Jewish tribes had different gods with the common name of Moloch. You will find at the same time that as one of these tribes becomes superior to the rest, and lays a claim to its own king being the king over all, it naturally wants also to preserve its own god as the god of all the tribes. Baal-Merodach, said the Babylonians, was the greatest god ; all the others were inferior ; Moloch-Yaveh was the superior to all other Molochs ; and these advances had to be decided by the fortunes of battle. The same struggle was here, in India also the same competing gods have been struggling with one another for supremacy, but the great good fortune of this country and of the

India's gift  
to the  
world;

The great  
doctrine

"He is one,  
whom the  
sages  
declared by  
various

This  
explains her  
whole  
history,

world was that there came out in the midst of the din and confusion, a voice which declared *Ekam sat vipra bahudha vadanti* ("He, whom the sages have called by various names is one"). It is not that Siva is superior to Vishnu, not that Vishnu is everything and Siva is nothing, but it is the same One whom you call either Siva or Vishnu, or by a hundred other names. The names are different, but it is the same One. The whole history of India you may read in these few words. The whole history has been a repetition in emphatic language, with tremendous power, of that one central doctrine. It was repeated in the land till it entered into the blood of the nation, till it began to tingle with every drop of blood that flowed in the nation's veins, till it became one with the life, part and parcel of the material of which it was composed, till the land was transmuted into the land of most wonderful toleration, giving it the right to welcome all religions as well as all sects into her all-absorbing compass.

her wonder-  
ful toleration

And herein is the explanation of a remarkable phenomenon witnessed only in India, which is that of various sects, apparently hopelessly contradictory, living yet in such harmony together. You may be a dualist, and I may be a monist. You may believe that you are the eternal servant of God, and another may declare that he is one with God Himself, yet both of them are good Hindus. How is that possible? Read then—*Ekam sat vipra bahudha vadanti* (That which exists is one; the sages call it by various

names). Above all others, my countrymen, this is the one grand truth that we have to teach to the world. Even the most highly educated of the other countries turn up their noses at an angle of forty-five degrees and call our religion idolatry. They never stopped to think what a mass of superstition there was in their own heads. It is still so everywhere, this tremendous sectarianism, this lowness and narrowness of the mind. The thing which a man has is the only thing worth having ; the only life worth living is his own little life of dollar-worship and mammon-worship ; the only little possession worth having is his own, and nothing else. If he can manufacture a little clay nonsense or invent a machine, that is to be admired beyond the greatest possessions. That is the case over the whole world, in spite of education and learning. But education has yet to begin in this world, and civilisation—civilisation has begun nowhere yet, ninety-nine decimal nine per cent of the human race are more or less savages still. We may read of these things in different books, we hear of toleration in religion and all that, but very little of it is there yet in the world, take my experience for that ; ninety-nine per cent do not even think of it. There is tremendous religious persecution yet, in every country in which I have been, and the same old objections are raised against learning anything new. Just the little toleration that is yet to be seen amongst men, just the little sympathy that may be in the world yet for reli-



and sym-  
pathy for all  
religions

gious thought, is practically here only, in the land of the Aryas, and nowhere else. It is here that Hindus build temples for Mohammedans and Christians ; nowhere else. If you go to other countries and ask Mohammedans, or people of other religions to build a temple for you, see how they will help. They will instead try to break down your temple and you too, if they can. This therefore is the one great lesson that the world wants most, that the world has yet to learn from India, the idea, not only of toleration, but of sympathy, as has found its expression in the *Siva Mahimna Stotra*—"Different rivers, taking their start from different mountains, running straight or crooked, at last come into the ocean, so, oh Siva, all men are coming unto Thee !"—"Though they may take various roads, all are on Thy way !—Some may run a little crooked, while others run straight, but at last, oh Lord, they will all come unto Thee. Then and then alone is your *Bhakti* and realisation of Siva complete, when you not only see Him in the *Lingum*, but in everything and everywhere as has been said in the *Srimad Bhagabat*, "He is the sage, he the lover of Hari, who sees Hari in everything and in everyone." Thus if you are a real lover of Siva or Hari you must see Him in everything, and in everyone. You must see that every worship is

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\* इक्ष्वां वेष्टिवाहसुकुटिलनामापबसुवां  
दृष्टामेको गम्यस्त्वमसि पयसानर्चय इव ॥  
शिवमहिमस्तोत्र ।

given unto Him whatever may be the name or the form, you must see that all knees bending towards the Kaaba, or kneeling in a Christian Church, or a Buddhist Temple, are kneeling unto Him—whether they know it or not, whether they are conscious of it or not,—that in whatever name or form they are offered, all flowers in all altars are laid at His Feet, for He is the one Lord of all, the one Soul of all souls. He knows infinitely better what this world wants than you or I. It is impossible that all difference can cease ; they must exist ; without variation life must cease. It is this clash, this differentiation of thought, that makes for light, for motion, for progress. Differentiation, infinitely contradictory, must remain, but it is not necessary that we should hate each other therefore. It is not necessary therefore, that we should fight each other. Thus we have to learn the one central truth again that was experienced only here, in our own motherland, and that has once more as in the past, to be preached from India. Why? Because not only was it in our books, but it runs through every phase of our national literature, and is in the national life. Here and here alone is it practised every day, and any man whose eyes are open can see that it is so here and here alone. So we are the fit people to teach religion. There are other and higher lessons that India can teach, but they are only for the learned. But this one lesson of mildness, gentleness, forbearance, toleration, sympathy, and brotherhood, this great truth, is what we call Thee

Unity in  
variety—  
is India's  
Mission to  
teach

by various names ; but Thou art One"—everyone—  
man, woman and child, learned or unlearned, without  
respect of race, or creed, or caste, must learn from  
India.

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## VEDANTISM.

(ADDRESS DELIVERED AT JAFFNA).

The subject is very large and the time is short ; a full analysis of the religion of the Hindus is impossible in one lecture. I will, therefore, present before you the salient points of our religion in as simple language as I can. The word Hindu, by which it is the fashion now-a-days to style ourselves, has lost all its meaning, for this word merely means those who lived on the other side of the river Indus. This name, Sanskrit Sindhu, was murdered into Hindu by the ancient Persians, and all people living on the other side of the river Sindhu were called by them Hindus. Thus this word has come down to us ; during the Mohammedan rule we took up the word ourselves. There may not be any harm in using the word, of course, but, as I have said, it has lost its significance, for all the people who live on this side of the Indus, you may mark in modern times, do not follow the same religion as they did in ancient times. The word, therefore, covers not only Hindus proper, but Mohammedans, Christians, Jains, and all the others who live in India. I, therefore, would not use the word Hindu. What word should we use then ? The other words which alone we can use are either the Vaidies, followers of the Vedas, or better still, the Vedantists, followers of the Ve-

The word 'Hindu'

The Sacred Books of the Hindus :—

danta. Most of the great religions of the world owe allegiance to certain books, which they believe are the words of God, or some other supernatural beings, and which are the basis of their religion. Now of all these books, according to the modern *savants* of the West, the oldest are the Vedas of the Hindus. A little idea, therefore, is necessary about the Vedas.

The Vedas.

The mass of writing called the Vedas is not the creation of persons. Its date has never been fixed, can never be fixed, for according to us, the Vedas are eternal. There is one salient point which I want you to remember, that all the other religions of the world claim their authority as being delivered by a personal God or a number of personal beings, angels, or special messengers of God, unto certain persons, while the claim of the Hindus is that the Vedas do not owe their authority to anybody, they are themselves the authority, being eternal—the knowledge of God. They were never written, never created, they have been throughout time ; just as creation is infinite and eternal, without beginning and without end, so is the knowledge of God without beginning and without end. And this knowledge is what is meant by the Vedas (*Vid*, to know). The mass of knowledge called the Vedas was discovered by personages called Rishis, and the Rishi is defined as a Mantra Drashta, a seer of thought ; not that the thought was his own. Whenever you hear that a certain passage of the Vedas came from a certain Rishi, never think that he wrote it, or created it out

of his mind ; he was the seer of the thought which already existed ; it existed in the universe eternally. This sage was the discoverer ; the Rishis were spiritual discoverers.

This mass of writing, the Vedas, is divided principally into two parts, the *Karma Kanda* and the *Jnana Kanda*—the work portion and the knowledge portion, the ceremonial and the spiritual portion. The work portion consists of various sacrifices ; most of them of late have been given up as not practicable under present circumstances ; some remain to the present day in some shape or other. The main ideas of the *Karma Kanda*, such as, the duties of man, the duties of the student, of the householder, of the recluse, and so forth, or the duties of man in various stations of life, are followed, more or less, down to the present day. But the spiritual portion of our religion is in the second part, the *Jnana Kanda*, the *Vedanta*, which means—the end of the Vedas, or the gist and the goal of the Vedas. The essence of the knowledge of the Vedas was called by the name of Vedanta or Upanishad. And all the sects of India, either Dualists, qualified Dualists, Monists, or the Sivaïtes, Vaisnavites, Saktas, Souras, Ganapatyas—each one that dares to come within the fold of Hinduism must acknowledge the Upanishads of the Vedas. They can have their own interpretations, can interpret them in their own way, but they must obey the authority. That is why we want to use the word Vedantist instead of Hindu.

Karma  
kanda and  
Jnana  
kanda.

All the philosophers of India who are orthodox have to acknowledge the authority of the Vedanta, and all our present day religions, however crude some of them may appear, however inexplicable some of their purposes may appear to be, one who understands them and studies them, can trace them back to the ideas of the Upanishads. So much these Upanishads have gone into our race that those of you who will study the symbology of the crudest religion of the Hindus will be astonished to find sometimes figurative expressions used regarding the Upanishads themselves or that the Upanishads themselves become symbolized in their turn after a time into figures and so forth in its hands. Thus most of the great spiritual and philosophical ideas that appear in the Upanishads are to-day with us household worship in the form of symbols. The various symbols that we use to-day have all come from the Vedanta, because in the Vedanta we find these used as figures of speech in connection with some great ideas and we can well see that these ideas went among the nation and permeated it thoroughly in time until they became part of their everyday life as symbols.

**Smritis.**

Next to the Vedanta come the Smritis. These also are books written by sages, but the authority of the Smritis is subordinate to that of the Vedanta, and they stand in the same relation with us as the Scriptures of the other religions stand with regard to them. We admit that the Smritis have been written by particular sages; in that sense they are in the

same level plane as the Scriptures of other religions, but these Smritis are not final authority. If there is anything in a Smriti which contradicts the Vedanta, the Smriti is to be rejected ; its authority is gone. These Smritis, we see again, have varied from time to time. We read that such and such a Smriti should have authority in the *Satya Yuga*, such and such in the *Treta Yuga*, some in the *Dwapara Yuga*, and some in the *Kali Yuga*, and so on, so that as essential conditions changed, as various circumstances came to have their influence on the race, manners and customs had to be changed, and these Smritis, as mainly regulating the manners and customs of the nation, had also to be changed from time to time. This is a point I especially ask you to remember. The principles of religion that are in the Vedanta are unchangeable. Why? Because they are all built upon the eternal principles that are in man and nature ; they can never change. Ideas about the soul, about going to heaven, and so on, can never change ; they were the same thousands of years ago, as they are today, and they will again be the same in millions of years to come. But those religious practices which are based entirely upon our social position and co-relation must change with the changes in society. Such an order, therefore, would be good and true at a certain period and not at another period. We find accordingly that certain foods are allowed at one time and stopped at another, because the food was good for that time ;



climatic and other things changed, various other circumstances required to be met, so the Smṛiti stopped these foods and so on. Thus it naturally follows that if in modern times our society requires some changes, they must be met, and sages will come and show the way how to meet them ; not one jot of the *principles* of our religion will be changed ; they will remain *eternally* intact.

**Puranas.**

Then there are the *Puranas*, in their five aspects, (*Puranam Panchalakshanam*) about history, about cosmology, about various symbolical illustrations of philosophical principles and so forth. These were written to popularize the religion of the Vedas. The language in which the Vedas are written is very ancient ; even amongst scholars very few can trace the date of these books. The *Puranas* were written in the language of the people of that time, in what we call modern Sanskrit. But then they were meant, not for scholars, but for the common people ; and the uneducated cannot understand philosophy. So such things were given to them in concrete form, by means of the lives of saints and kings and great men, historical events that happened to the race, and so on. Everything that the sages could get hold of was taken up, but each only to illustrate the eternal principles of religion.

**Tantras.**

\* There are still other books, the *Tantras*. These are very much like the *Puranas* in some respects, and in some of them there is an attempt to revive the old sacrificial ideas of the *Karma Kanda*.

All these constitute the Scriptures of the Hindus, and where there is such a mass of sacred books with a single race, and nation which (for nobody knows how many thousands of years) has devoted the greatest part of its energies to the thought of philosophy and spirituality, it is quite natural that there should be also many sects ; it is wonderful indeed, that there are not thousands more. And these sects differ very much from each other in certain points. We could not take the time to understand all the differences between these various sects, and all the spiritual details about them ; therefore I take up the common basis, the essential principles of them all, which every Hindu must believe.

The Principles of Hinduism.

The first is this idea of the creation, that this Nature, Praakriti, Maya is infinite, and without beginning. It is not that this world was created the other day, not that a God came and created the world, and since that time has been sleeping ; that cannot be. The creative energy is still going on, God is eternally creating—never at rest. Remember the passage in the Gita where Vishnu says : "If I remain at rest for one moment this universe will be destroyed." If that creative energy which is working all around us, day and night, were to cease for one second the whole thing would fall to the ground. There never was a time when that energy did not work throughout the universe. But there is the law of cycles, *Pralaya*. Our Sanskrit word for creation properly translated, should be *projection, and not*

Projection, not creation.

*creation*. For the word *creation* in the English language has unhappily got that fearful, that most crude idea of something coming out of nothing, creation out of nonentity, non-existence becoming existence, which, of course, I would not insult you by asking you to believe. Our word, therefore, is projection. The whole of this Nature existed before, it became finer and subsided, then after a period of rest, as it were, the whole thing was projected forward again. The same combinations, the same evolution, the same manifestations have appeared once more and remain playing, as it were, for a certain time, again to break into pieces, and become finer and finer, till the whole thing has subsided again to come. Thus it goes on backward and forward, with a wave-like motion, through eternity. Time and space and all are within this nature. To say, therefore, it had a beginning, is utter nonsense. No such question can occur as of its beginning, and of its end. Therefore, wherever in our Scriptures the words beginning and end are used, you must remember that it means the beginning and the end of one particular cycle ; no more than that.

What makes this creation? God. What do I mean by the use of the English word God? Certainly not the ordinary idea of the word in English, but something very different. There is no other word in English. I would rather confine myself to the Sanskrit word *Brahman*. He is the common universal cause of all these manifestations. What is this

God or  
Brahman?

*Brahman*? He is eternally pure, eternally awake, the allmighty, the all-knowing, the allmerciful, the omnipresent, without form, without parts. He creates this universe. But if he is always creating and upholding this universe two difficulties arise.

First there is partiality in the universe. One is born happy, and another unhappy; one is rich and another is poor; this is partiality. Then there is cruelty also, for here the very condition of life is death. One animal tears the other to pieces, each man tries to trample on the body of his own brother. This competition, cruelty, horror, sighs rending the skies day and night, is the state of things in this world of ours. If this be the creation of a God, then that God is worse than cruel, worse than any devil that man ever imagined. Ay! says the Vedanta, it is not the fault of God that this partiality exists, that this competition exists. Who makes it? We ourselves. There is a cloud pouring its rain over all fields alike. But only that field which is well cultivated can take advantage of the shower; another, which has not been tilled or taken care of, cannot take that advantage. It is not the fault of the cloud. His mercy is eternal and unchangeable; it is we that make the differentiation. But how can this difference be explained? Some are born happy here, some are born unhappy. They do nothing to make that difference! They do—in their last birth, the birth before this.

Explanation  
of  
differences  
in life.

We therefore come to the second principle on

Life is  
eternal.

which we all agree, not only all Hindus, but all Buddhists, and all Jains. We all agree here that life is also eternal. It is not that it has sprung out of nothing ; that cannot be. Such a life would not be worth having. Everything that has a beginning in time must end in time. If life began but yesterday it must end to-morrow, and annihilation is the result. Life must have been pre-existent. It does not require much in modern times to see that, for all the sciences of modern times have been coming to our help, illustrating from the material world the principles embodied in our Scriptures. You know already, that each one of us is the effect of an infinite past, the child is ushered into the world, not as something flashing from the hands of nature, as poets delight so much to depict, but as one who comes in with the burden of an infinite past of good and evil deeds to work out. And we know that it does so. That makes the differentiation. This is the law of Karma. Each one of us is the maker of his own fate. It knocks on the head at once all doctrines of predestination and fate, and it gives us the only possible reconciliation between God and man. We, we, and none else, are responsible for what we suffer. We are the effects, and we are the causes. We are free, therefore. If I am unhappy, it has been of my own making and that very thing shows that I can be happy if I will. If I am impure, that is also of my own making, and that very thing shows that I can be pure if I will. So

The Law  
of Karma :  
Man makes  
his own  
destiny.

on. The human will stands beyond all circumstances. Before it, all the powers, even of nature, must succumb, bow down, and become its servants. Such is the infinite power of the will in man, and such is the result.

The next question, of course, would naturally be what is the soul? We cannot understand the God of our Scriptures without understanding about the soul. There have been attempts in India, and outside of India, to catch a glimpse of the beyond by studying the external nature, and we all know what an awful failure has been the result. Instead of giving us a glimpse of the beyond, the more we study the material world the more we tend to become materialized. Even that little spirituality which we possessed before vanishes, the more we handle the material world. Therefore, that, is not the way to spirituality, to the knowledge of the highest truth; but through the heart lies the way to the human soul. The external does not teach us anything about the beyond, about the infinite; it is only the internal that does so. Through the soul, therefore, the analysis of the human soul alone, can we understand God. We have differences of opinion as to the nature of the human soul among the various sects in India, but there are certain points where we all agree; first, that the soul is without beginning and without end, immortal by its very nature; and secondly, that all powers, blessing, purity, and omnipresence,

The  
doctrine  
of Soul.

Differences  
are due  
to the  
manifesta-  
tions of  
the Soul.

omniscience are in each soul. That is a grand idea that we ought to remember. In man or in animal, however weak or wicked, great or small, resides the same omnipresent, omniscient soul. The difference is not in the soul, but in the manifestation of it in them. Between me and the smallest animal, the difference is only in the degree of manifestation, but as a principle the animal is the same as I am, my brother, and has the same soul as I have. This is the greatest principle that India has preached. The talk of brotherhood of man thus becomes reduced in India to the brotherhood of universal life, of all animals, of all life down even to the little ants. And all these forms are bodies alike of the same soul. "Thus the sage, knowing that the same Lord inhabits all bodies, will worship every body as such."\* That is why in India there have been such merciful ideas about animals, about the poor, and about everybody and everything else. The reason lies in this one common ground of our idea of the soul.

"Soul" not  
Atman.

One thing more about the soul. Those who study the English language are often deluded by the words soul and mind. The Sanskrit word *Atman* and the English word soul signify two entirely different things. What we call *Manas*, the mind they call the soul. The West never had the idea of the soul until the last twenty years, and

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\* "एवं सर्वेषु भूतेषु भक्तिरव्यभिचारिणी  
कर्तव्यापन्निते ज्ञात्वा सर्वभूतजनं हरिम्।"

even then, through the Sanskrit Philosophy. It says, the body is here, beyond that is the mind, yet the mind is not the *Atman*; it is the *Sukshma Sarira*, or the fine body, made of fine particles, which goes from birth to birth; but behind the mind is the *Atman*, the soul, the Self of man. It cannot be translated therefore by the English word soul or mind, so we shall have to use the word *Atman*, or, as Western philosophers have attempted of late, the word Self. Whatever be the word you use, you must keep it clear in your mind, that the *Atman* is as well separate from the mind, as from the body, and that this *Atman* accompanies the mind or the *Sukshma Sarira* as it goes from birth to birth. And when the time comes that it has attained to all knowledge, and manifested itself in perfection, then this going from birth to birth ceases for it. Then it is at liberty either to keep that mind or the *Sukshma Sarira* or to let it go for ever, and remain independent and free through all eternity. The goal of the soul is to attain this freedom. This doctrine of freedom is peculiar to our religion. We also have heavens, and hells too, but these are not infinite, for in the very nature of things they cannot be. If there were any heavens, they would be only repetitions of this world of ours on a bigger scale, with a little more happiness, a little more enjoyment, and all the worse for it. There are many of these heavens. Persons who do good works here, with the thought of reward, when they die are born as

Freedom  
is the  
goal



gods in one of these heavens, as Indra and so on. These names of gods are the names of certain positions or offices. The gods also have been men, and by good work they have become as such; and the different names that you read, Indra, Varuna and and so on, are not the names of the same set of persons. There was and will be thousands to hold these positions. Nahusha was a great king, and when he died he became Indra. Thus we see that it is a position merely ; one soul by high merit takes the Indra-position, remains as such only for a certain time, then dies there, and is born again as man to work out its freedom. Therefore the human body is the highest of all bodies. Some of these gods may try to go higher by giving up all ideas of enjoyments in heavens, but, as in this world wealth and position and enjoyment delude the vast majority, so most of the gods become so deluded in these heavens also, and after working out their good *Karma* fall back and become human beings again. This earth, therefore, is the *Karma Bhumi* ; it is this earth from which we attain to liberation. So even these heavens are not worth having. What is then worth having? --*Mukti*, freedom. Even in the highest of heavens, says our Scripture, you are a slave ; what matters it if you are a king here or a god there for twenty thousand years? So long as you have a body, so long as you are a slave to happiness, so long as time works on you, space works on you, you are a slave. The idea, therefore, is to be free of the external and

the internal nature. Nature must stand at your feet, and you must trample on it, free and glorious, going beyond. No more then there is life ; therefore, no more death ; no more enjoyment, therefore, no more misery. It is bliss beyond everything, unspeakable, indestructible. What we call happiness and good here are but particles of that eternal Bliss. This is the goal.

The soul is also sexless ; we cannot say of the *Atman* that it is a man or a woman. That belongs to the body alone. All such ideas, therefore, as I am a man or I, a woman, are delusions when spoken with regard to the Self, and are only proper when spoken of the body. So are the ideas of age, the Self never ages ; the ancient One is always the same.

How did the Self come down then ? There is but one answer to the question in our Scriptures. Ignorance is the cause of all this bondage. It is through ignorance that we have become bound ; knowledge will cure it, take us to the other side. How will that knowledge come ? Through love, *Bhakti*. By the worship of God through love and by loving all beings as the temples of God ; for He resides therein. With that intense love will come knowledge, and ignorance will disappear, the bonds will break, and the soul will become free. There are two ideas of God in our Scriptures, the one personal, the other impersonal. The idea of the Personal God is that He is the omnipresent creator, perserver, and destroyer of everything, the eternal father and

Two ideas  
of God :  
Personal  
and  
Impersonal.

mother of the universe, but one who is eternally separate from us and from all souls ; and liberation consists in coming near unto Him and living in Him. There is the other idea, of the Impersonal God, where all those adjectives are taken off as superfluous, as illogical, and the idea is preached only of an impersonal, omnipresent being, who cannot be called a knowing being, because knowledge is limitation and belongs only to the human mind. He can not be called a thinking being, because that is the process of the weak. He cannot be called a reasoning being, because reasoning also is a sign of weakness. He cannot be called a creating being, because none creates except those that are in bondage. What bondage has He? None works except for the fulfilment of desires ; what desires has He? None works except it be to supply some wants ; what wants has He? In the Vedas it is not the word "He" that has been used in relation to God, but "It"; for the word "He" would make an invidious distinction, as if God were a man. So the impersonal "It", has been used, to distinguish God's nature. This is what has been called the Advaita system.

Our relations with the Impersonal God.

And what are our relations with this Impersonal Being? That we are It—that we and It are one. Every one of us is but a manifestation of that Impersonal God, the basis of all being. Misery consists in thinking ourselves to be different from this Infinite, Impersonal Being ; and liberation consists in knowing our unity with this wonderful Imperson-

ality. These, in short, are the two ideas of God that we find in our Scriptures. We may remark here, that it is only through the idea of the Impersonal God that we can have any system of ethics. In every nation the truth has been preached from the most ancient times, enjoining us to love our fellow beings as ourselves. In India however, it has been preached, 'love all beings as yourselves' ; in that we have been told to make no distinction between men and animals. But no reason was forthcoming, no one knew why it would be good to love human beings, much less other beings as ourselves. And the why of it is there again, it is there, in the light of the idea of the Impersonal God, that you understand its reason. For you learn from it that the whole world is one ; and the idea of the oneness of the universe and of the solidarity of all life, brings you inevitably to the conclusion that in hurting one you are hurting yourself and that in loving one you are loving yourself. Hence we understand the secret of why we ought not to hurt others. The reason for ethics, therefore, can only be had from this ideal of the Impersonal God.

The true  
reason for  
ethics.

There are yet other great issues of the Impersonal ideal. I understand the wonderful flow of love that comes from the idea of a Personal God, I thoroughly appreciate the power of *Bhakti* on men in other ages, who needed something different from us of the present times, to mould and elevate themselves. What we want now in our country, however, is not

India wants  
not love so  
much as  
strength.

so much of weeping, as a little strength. And what a mine of strength is in this Impersonal God, when all superstitions have been thrown overboard, and man stands on his feet with the knowledge that he is the Impersonal Being of the world ! What can make him afraid then ? He cares not even for nature's laws and death becomes a joke unto him. Man stands then on the glory of his own Soul, infinite, eternal, and deathless—the soul that no instruments can pierce, no heat dry, no fire burn, no water melt, the Soul that is infinite, birthless, deathless, and without beginning or end, the Soul before whose magnitude the suns, the moons and all these systems appear like drops in the ocean, and before whose glory space crumbles up into nothingness, and time vanishes into non-existence: This glorious Soul we must believe in. Out of that will come power. Whatever you think, that you will be. If you think yourselves weak, weak you will be ; if you think yourselves strong, strong you will be ; if you think yourselves impure, impure you will be ; if you think yourselves pure, pure you will be. The Impersonal idea of the soul therefore teaches us not to think ourselves weak, but strong, omnipotent, omniscient. No matter if I have not expressed these yet ; these are in me. All knowledge is in me, all power, all purity, and all freedom. Why can I not express these ? Because I do not believe in the Soul. Let me believe in it and these will come out, must. This is what the idea of the Impersonal teaches.

Only the  
Impersonal  
idea gives  
this  
strength.

Make your children strong from their very childhood ; teach them no form of weakness, but make them strong to stand on their feet, bold, all-conquering, all-suffering, by letting them learn from the very first, of the glory of the Soul. That Impersonal ideal you get in the Vedanta and there alone. It has ideas of love and worship and other things which we have in other religions, and plenty of them too ; but this in it is the life-giving thought, the most wonderful. This and this alone, is the great thought that is going to revolutionize the world and reconcile the knowledge of the material world with religion.

Thus I have tried to bring before you the salient points of our religion—the principles on which it stands. And now I have only to say a few words Practical Vedanta. about the practice and the application of them. As we have seen, under the circumstances existing in India many sects must naturally appear. As a fact too, we find many sects, but at the same time we find this mysterious fact that in India these sects do not quarrel with each other. The Sivaite does not say that every Vaishnavite is going to be damned nor the Vaishnavite that every Sivaite will be damned. The Sivaite says, this is my path, and you have yours ; at the end we must come together. They all know that in India. This is the theory of *Ishtam*. It has been recognised from the most ancient times that there may be various forms of worshipping God. It has also been recognized that different constitu-

Theory of  
'Ishtam.'

tions require different methods. What is your method of coming to God may not be my method, possibly may hurt me altogether. Such an idea as that there is only one way for everybody is injurious, meaningless, and utterly to be avoided. Woe unto the world when everyone is of the same religious opinion and takes to the same path. Then all religion and all thought will be destroyed. This variety is the very soul of life. When it dies out creation will die also. As long as this variation in thought is kept up we shall exist ; thus we need not quarrel because there is variety. Your way is very good for you, but not for me. My way is good for me but not for you. My way is called in Sanskrit my *Ishtam*. Therefore, mind you, we have no quarrel with any religion in the world. We have each our own *Ishtam*. But when we in India see men coming and saying "this is the only way," and trying to force it on us, we have a word to say ; we laugh at them. For such to talk of love is absurd—for they want to destroy their brothers because they seem to follow a different path towards God. Their love does not count for much. What can they preach of love, they, who cannot bear another man to follow a different path from their own? If that is love, what is hatred? We have no quarrel with any religion whatsoever in the world, whether it worships Christ, or Buddha or Mahomet, or any prophet in the world. "Welcome, my brother," the Hindu says, "I am going to help you ; but do you also allow me to follow my way, my own

*Ishtam*. Your way is very good, no doubt, but it may be dangerous for me. My own experience tells me what food is good for me, and no army of doctors can tell me that. So I know from my own experience what path is best for me." The goal being the realisation of the Divinity within the *Ishtam*, we say therefore that, if a temple, or a symbol, or an image, helps you to realise that, you are welcome. Have two hundred or more images if you like. If certain forms and formulae help you to realise the Divinity within, God speed you ; have, by all means, whatever forms and temples and ceremonies, you want to bring you nearer to God. But do not quarrel about them ; the moment you quarrel, you are not going Godward ; you are going backward, towards the brutes.

These are a few ideas in our religion. It is the inclusion of ~~every one~~ and the exclusion of none. Our castes and institutions, though apparently linked with our religion, are not really so. These institutions have been necessary to protect us as a nation, and when this necessity for self-preservation will be no more they will die their natural death. But, for the present, the older I grow the better I come to think of these time-honoured institutions of India. There was a time when I used to think many of them to be useless and worthless, but the older I grow the more I come to feel a diffidence in cursing any one of them, for I find each one of them to be the embodiment of the experience of centuries. A child of yesterday destined to die the day-after to-morrow

Caste and other institutions are no part of religion.



comes to me, and ask me to change all my plans ; and if I hear the advice of that baby and change accordingly I myself would be the fool for that ; and no one else. Such is much of the advice that is coming to us from different countries as regards social institutions. Tell them, I will hear you when you have made a stable society yourselves. Tell them, you cannot hold on to one idea for two days, but quarrel and fail ; you are born like moths in the spring and die like them too, in five minutes ; you come up like bubbles and burst like bubbles too. Tell them, form a stable society like ours first, make laws and institutions that remain undiminished in their power through scores of centuries, and there will be time then to talk on the subject with you, but till then, my friend, you are only a giddy child.

I have finished what I had to say about our religion. I will end by reminding you of the one pressing necessity of the day. Praise Vyasa, the great author of the Mahabharata, that in this *Kali Yuga* there is one great work. The *Tapas* and other hard *yogas* that were practised in other *Yugas* do not work now. What is needed in this *Yuga* is giving and helping others. What are these giving—*Danam*? The highest of gifts is the giving of spiritual knowledge, the next is the giving of secular knowledge, and the next is the saving of life. The last is by giving food and drink. He who gives spiritual knowledge, saves the soul from many and many a birth. He who gives secular knowledge opens the

The imparting of spiritual knowledge is the highest gift.

eyes of human beings towards that spiritual knowledge. Thus below these two come all other gifts, even the saving of life here. It is necessary therefore, that you should learn this, and note that all other kinds of work are of much less value than that. The highest and greatest help is that given in the dissemination of spiritual knowledge. There is an eternal fountain of spirituality in our Scriptures. And where on earth except in this land of renunciation do we find such noble examples of practical spirituality? I have had a little experience of the world. Believe me, there are great talks in other lands, but the practical man of religion, the man who has carried religion into his life, is to be seen here and here alone. Talking is not religion, parrots talk, and machines too talk now-a-days. But show me the life of renunciation, of spirituality, of all-suffering, of infinite love. Then and not before that you are a spiritual man. With such ideas and such noble practical examples in our country it would be a great pity if all the treasures in the brains and in the hearts of all these great Yogins did not come out and become the property alike of every one, rich and poor, high and low. And not only here, but it must be thrown broadcast all over the world. This is one of our greatest duties ; and you will find that the more you work to help others the more you help yourselves. This then is the one great duty on you if you really love your religion, and country—that you must struggle hard and be up and doing, to

Our first duty is to spread spiritual ideas all the world over.

bring out the treasures from our closed books, and deliver them over to their rightful heirs. And above all, one thing more is necessary. For ages we have been saturated with awful jealousy ; we are always getting jealous of each other. Why has this man a little precedence, and not I? Aye even in the worship of God we want precedence!—to such a state of slavery have we come. This is to be avoided. The crying sin of India at present is this slavery, this everyone wanting to command and no one to obey. First learn to obey and the power to command will come by itself. First learn to be a servant, and then you will be fit to be a master. It is owing to the absence of that wonderful *Brahmacharya* system of yore, that teaches to get the control of one's mind before everything else, that things have come to such a pass. Avoid this jealousy, therefore, and you will do greater things than what have yet been done. Our ancestors did most wonderful works and we look back upon them with veneration and pride, let us also be up and doing that others, in their turn, would look back upon us with blessings and with pride as their worthy ancestors. And with the blessings of the Lord every one here will do such deeds yet that these will eclipse those works of our ancestors great and glorious as they may have been.

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## THE IDEAL OF INDIA AND HER MISSION.

(ADDRESS DELIVERED AT PAMBAN).

Our dear motherland is the sacred land of religion and philosophy—the birthplace of spiritual giants—the land of renunciation, where and where alone, from the most ancient to the most modern times, there has always been the vision of the highest ideal of life open to man.

I have travelled through many countries of the West, and have been in close touch with many races ; and each race and each nation appears to me to have a particular ideal—a prominent ideal running through and guiding its whole life, and in this lies the backbone of its national life. Neither politics nor military power, neither commercial supremacy nor mechanical genius, furnishes India with that backbone, but religion, and religion alone, is all that we have and mean to have. For spirituality has The great spiritual ideal of India. always been ours in India.

Great indeed are the manifestation of muscular power, and marvellous the manifestation of intellect expressing itself through machines by the applications of science ; yet, none of these are more potent than the influence which spirit exerts upon the world.

The history of our race shows that India has always been most active. We are told to-day by

In religion,  
India  
manifests  
her activity.

men who ought to know better, that the Hindu is mild and passive, and this has become a sort of proverb with the people of other lands. I discard the idea that India was ever passive. Nowhere has activity been more pronounced than in this blessed land of ours. And as the result of that activity this most ancient and magnanimous race still lives, and at every decade its glorious career seems to take on fresh youth—undying and imperishable. That activity is here still and in answer to those who gainsay it, by judging us according to their own standard of activity, we can quote a rather commonplace proverb peculiarly expressive of the frailty of human nature—that there is ‘nothing like leather.’ A shoemaker understands only his own trade and thinks there is nothing more important in this life than the manufacturing of shoes. A brick-layer understands nothing to be higher than brick-laying and attempts to prove the supreme importance of that alone in his life from day to day. And so on with all the rest. The reason for this is plain. When the vibrations of light are very intense, we do not see them, because we are so constituted that we cannot see beyond our own plane of vision. So these people are blind to the spiritual activity that is still behind our race. But real thinkers with their subtle introspection are able to see it present even amongst the common people of India.

The eyes of the whole world are now turned towards this land of ours for spiritual food, and India

will have to work at present for all the races. For here alone is the highest ideal for mankind. Western scholars are now struggling to understand that ideal. But that was found out long ago in India. That ideal has been kept enshrined in our Sanskrit Literature and Philosophy and to teach that has been the characteristic of India all through the ages.

No matter, if no missionary went out of India to propagate the Hindu ideal since the dawn of modern history. She shall have to do that work at present. A wonderful change has come upon the world and she will have to change accordingly. The highest ideal is going to be spread among all the nations in accordance with the promise of Sir Bhagavan Krishna—"whenever virtue subsides and immorality prevails, I come again to help the world",—and India will have to help as she did in the past. For believe me, religious researches disclose to us the fact that there is not a country possessing a good ethical code but has taken something of it from India, and that there is not one religion possessing good ideas of the immortality of the soul but has derived it directly or indirectly from India.

There never was a time in the world's history when there was so much tyranny of the strong over the weak, robbery, and high-handedness, as at the latter end of the nineteenth century. But India alone knows that there is no salvation except through the conquering of the desires, and that no man is really free who is subject to the bondage of matter.

The world  
wants the  
spiritual  
ideal to-day  
from India.

This great truth all the nations are slowly coming to understand and appreciate. The nations are ready at present to accept the truth and they are going to have it ere long, for, as soon as the disciples are in a position to grasp a truth, the Lord, in His infinite mercy, which never ceaseth and is ever flowing alike in all creeds, sends fitted teachers to help them. We know that the same is going to be enacted at present, for India alone has known the truth for certain that the Lord of one religion is the Lord of all religions. As soon as the disciple is in a position to grasp this truth, the words of the *Guru* come to his help. The Lord sends help to his own children in His Infinite mercy which never ceaseth and is ever flowing in all creeds. Our Lord is the Lord of all religions—this idea belongs to India alone and I challenge any one of you to find it in any other scripture of the world.

We Hindus have now been placed, by the will of the Lord in a very critical and responsible position. The nations of the West are coming to us for spiritual help. A great moral obligation rests on the sons of India to fully equip themselves for the work of enlightening the world on the problems of human existence. One thing we may note here about the fitness of India for the work, that whereas, you will find that good and great men of other countries take pride in tracing back their descent to some robber-barons who lived in mountain fortresses and emerged from time to time to plunder passing wayfarers, and this to them is great, we

Hindus, on the other hand, take pride in being the descendants of Rishis and sages, who lived in mountains and caves, on roots and fruits, meditating on the Supreme. We may be degraded and degenerated now, but however degraded and degenerated we may be, we can become great if we only begin to work in right earnest on behalf of our religion.

Accept my hearty thanks for the kind and cordial reception you have given me. It is impossible for me to express my gratitude to H. H. the Rajah of Ramnad for his love towards me. If any good work has been done by me and through me, for India, every bit of it is due to this great man ; for it was he who conceived the idea of my going to Chicago and it was he who put that idea into my head and persistently urged me on to accomplish it. Standing beside me, he is still hoping for more and more work, with all his old enthusiasm. I wish there were half a dozen more such Rajahs to take interest in our dear motherland and work for her amelioration in the spiritual line.

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## WHAT IS TRUE RELIGION?

(ADDRESS DELIVERED AT RAMESVARAM).

Love, not  
ceremony,  
constitutes  
religion.

It is in love, the pure and sincere love of the heart that religion exists and not in ceremony. Unless a man is pure in body and mind, his coming into a temple and worshipping Siva is useless. The prayers of those that are pure in mind and body will be answered by Siva, and those that are impure, and yet try to teach religion to others, will meet with a very bad end. External worship is a symbol only of internal worship ; whereas, internal worship and purity are the real things. For without them, external worship would be of no avail. Try always, to remember this. For, people have become so degraded in this modern *Kali Yuga* that they think their sins will be forgiven even when they do heinous things, if only they go to a holy place, afterwards. But they know not the fact that if a man goes into a temple with an impure heart he takes all the sins that were there already, and goes home a worse man. *Tirtha* is a place which is full of holy associations of holy men. So that if holy people live in a certain place, where there is not a single temple even, that place is to be regarded as a *Tirtha*. And if unholy people live in a place where there are hundreds of temples, the *Tirtha* will vanish from

that place. Again, it is most difficult to live in a *Tirtha*, for while sins committed in other places can easily be removed, the sins committed in a *Tirtha* can seldom be removed. Thus the gist of all worship is to be pure and to do good to others. And he who sees Siva in the poor, the weak, and the diseased, really worships Siva ; while he who sees Siva in the image only, has merely begun to learn to worship Him. Aye, with him who has served and helped one ; poor man seeing Siva in him, without thinking of his caste, or creed, or race, or colour, Siva is more pleased than with the man who sees Him in temples only.

A rich man had a garden for which he engaged two gardeners. One of them was very lazy and did no work ; but when the rich man used to come to the garden, the lazy man would get up with folded arms and be lost in admiration, saying, "how beautiful is the face of my master !" The other gardener would not talk much, but work hard to produce all sorts of fruits and vegetables and carry them on his head, a long way off, to his master. Which of these two would be more loved by the master ? Now Siva is that master, and the world, His garden ; and there are two sorts of gardeners in it ; the one, that is lazy, hypocritical, and does nothing beside talking about the beauty of Siva's eyes and nose and all that ; and the other, that is taking care of Siva's children, and especially of all those that are poor and weak in His creation. And which of these would be loved by Siva ? Certainly he that serves His children. He

The story of  
the rich man  
and his two  
gardeners.

To serve  
man is to  
serve God.

who wants to serve the father must serve his children first. And he who wants to serve Siva must first serve the world. It is said in the Srimad Bhagavat, that those who serve the servants of God are His greatest servants—bear that in mind. Therefore let me tell you again that you must help every one who comes to you as much as it lies in your power. For in that is that sort of good *Karma*, the power of which brings purity to the heart or *Chitta Suddhi*, and makes Siva, Who resides in every one of us, to become manifest. Indeed, He is there, always, in the heart of every one. And as we cannot see our image if there is dirt and dust on a mirror, so ignorance and wickedness are the dirt and dust that cover His image on the mirror of our heart. And the primal sin, the sin that produces them, is selfishness, or the act of thinking of ourselves first in every single thing. He who thinks, 'I will eat first, I will have more money than others, and I will possess everything,' or even he who thinks 'I will get to heaven or liberation or *Mukti* before others,' is the selfish man. The unselfish man says, 'I will be the last I do not care to go to heaven or attain liberation, nay, I will go to hell, even if by doing that I can help my brothers.' This kind of unselfishness is the test of religion. And he who has it, has indeed attained the highest spirituality and is thereby nearest to Siva. Aye, that man, be he learned or ignorant, be he conscious of it or not, is nearer to Siva than anybody else. But the man who is selfish,

unselfishness  
is the test  
of religion.

even though he has visited all the temples, seen all the places of pilgrimage, and painted himself with sandal-wood paste, like a leopard, is still the farthest off from Siva.

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## THE NATIONAL IDEAL OF FUTURE INDIA.

(ADDRESS DELIVERED AT RAMNAD).

**India is  
awaking.**

The longest night seems to be passing over, the sorest trouble seems to have an end at last, the sleeping form seems to be awaking, and a voice is coming unto us! Away back, where history and even tradition fails to peep into the gloom of the past, coming down from there, resounding from peak to peak of the infinite Himalaya of knowledge, of love, and of work, which is this motherland of ours, India,—a voice is coming unto us, gentle, firm, and yet unmistakable in its utterances, and is gaining volume as days pass by, and behold the sleeper is awaking! Like the bracing breeze of the mountains, it is bringing life into her almost dead bones and muscles! The lethargy is passing away, and only the blind do not see, or the perverted will not see, that she is awaking, this mother-land of ours, from her long deep sleep. None can resist her any more; never is she going to sleep any more; no outward powers can hold her back any longer; for with infinite powers, newly born, she is rising to her feet again.

Your Highness and gentlemen of Ramnad, accept my heartfelt thanks for the cordiality and kindness with which you have received me. I feel

that you are cordial and kind, for, heart speaks unto heart better than any language ; spirit speaks unto spirit in silence, and yet in most unmistakable terms, and I feel it in the very core of my heart. Your Highness of Ramnad, if there has been any work done by my humble self in the cause of our religion and our mother-land in the Western countries, if any little work has been done in rousing the interests of our own people by drawing their attention to the inestimable jewels that are lying deep buried, as it were, round about their own home, unknown to them, if they are being called to go and drink out of the eternal fountain of water which is flowing perennially by their own home instead of dying of thirst or drinking of the filthy ditch water elsewhere, out of the blindness of ignorance, if anything has been done to rouse our people towards action, to make them understand that in everything, religion and religion alone is the life of India, and when that goes India will die, in spite of politics, in spite of social reforms, in spite of Kuvera's wealth poured upon the head of every one of her children, if anything has been done towards these ends,—then India and every country where such work has been done by me owe it mainly to you, Rajah of Ramnad. For it was you who gave me the idea first and it was you who persistently urged me on towards the work. You, as it were, intuitively understood what was going to be, and taking me up by the hands, helped me all along, and have never ceased to encourage me. Well is it

The relation  
of the  
Swami's  
work to the  
Rajah of  
Ramnad.

therefore that you should be the first to rejoice at my success, and meet it is that I should land in your territory first on my return to India. Great works are yet to be done, wonderful things will have to be worked out, and we shall have to teach other nations many things, as has been told by your Highness already. This was the mother-land of philosophy, of spirituality and of ethics, of sweetness, gentleness, and love. So is it still, and my experience of the world leads me to stand on a firm ground to make the bold statement that India is still the first and foremost of all the nations in the world in having these qualities. For look at this little phenomenon. There have been immense political changes within the last four or five years—gigantic organisations undertaking to subvert the whole of the existing institutions and meeting with a certain amount of success, all over the Western world. Ask our people if they have heard anything of them. And the answer will be, no, not a word! But that there has been a Parliament of Religions in Chicago, and that a Sannyasin sent over from India to that Parliament, was very well received, and that since that time he has been working in various countries in the West, the poorest beggar in India has known! I have heard it said that our masses are dense and do not care for any information. I had a foolish leaning towards that opinion, before, but experience, I find, is a far more glorious teacher than any amount of speculation, or any

amount of books written by globe-trotters and hasty observers. For experience teaches me that the masses of India are neither dense nor slow, but are as eager and thirsty for information as any other nation under the sun ; but then each nation has its own part to play, and naturally, each nation has its own peculiarity and individuality as well, with which it is born. Each represents, as it were, one particular note in the harmony of nations, and in that lies its very life and vitality. That in short, is the backbone, the foundation, and the bedrock, of that nation's life. Different life-centres in different nations. And the foundation, the backbone, the life-centre of this blessed land, is religion and religion alone. That is why, when one talks of politics, of the glory of acquisition of immense wealth poured in by trade, of the power and spread of commercialism, and of the glorious fountain of physical liberty, the Hindu mind does not understand nor care to understand them. But let one speak to it on spirituality, religion, God, and the soul, or on the infinite Absolute, and on spiritual freedom, and one will find, I assure you, the lowest peasant in India better informed in them than many a so-called philosopher in other lands. I have said, before, gentlemen, that we shall have to teach something to the world yet, and I make bold to say, here, that we, shall have to teach it these subjects. That indeed, is the *raison d'être*, that this nation lived on in spite of nearly a thousand years of foreign rule and oppression. And that the



nation still lives is because it still holds to God and to its treasure-house of religion and spirituality.

Religion and spirituality therefore, are still in this land and they are the fountains which will overflow and flood the world, to bring in new life and vitality to the Western and other nations, borne down, half-killed and degraded by political ambition and social scheming. From out of the many voices, consonant and dissentient, from out of the medley of sounds filling the Indian atmosphere, rises up supreme, striking, and full, one note, Renunciation. Give up!—is the watchword of all the Indian Scriptures. For the world is a delusion of two days, and present life of five minutes. And behind it is the infinite beyond, go there. This continent is illumined with brave and gigantic minds and intelligences who think of this so-called infinite universe as a mud-puddle, and beyond it and still beyond they go. Time, even infinite time, is but non-existence. Beyond and beyond time they go. Space is nothing to them, and beyond that they want to go. This is the very soul of religion. This transcendentalism, this struggle to go beyond, daring to tear the veil off the face of nature and have a glimpse of the beyond, at any risk, at any price, is the characteristic of my nation. Talks on politics and social regeneration, advices on money-making and commercialism roll down like water from a duck's back from the minds of my people. This then, this spirituality, is what

In renun-  
ciation lies  
the life-  
centre of  
the Indian  
nation.

you have to teach the world. And have we nothing to learn from the world? A little of material knowledge, of organisation, of ability to handle powers, bring the best results out of the smallest of causes. These to a certain extent we may learn from the West. But because all men in the country cannot renounce completely, although that is their ideal, if anyone preaches to India to take up the ideal of eating, drinking and making merry, if any man wants to aoptheosise the material world into the "God for India," then that man's efforts will never succeed; he shall have no place in this holy land and the Indian mind will never want to hear him. Aye, in spite of the sparkle and glitter of Western civilisation, in spite of all its polish and its marvellous manifestation of power, I tell them standing upon this platform, to their face, that it is all in vain. It is vanity of vanities. For God alone lives, the soul alone lives and spirituality alone lives. And I should advise my people to hold on always to their ideal in life.

Yet, some sort of materialism, toned down to our own requirements would be a blessing to many of our brothers who are not yet ripe for renunciation and the highest truth. The one mistake made in every country and in every society is to force people who are not ready, into accepting the highest truths; and it is a thing to be regretted that in India, where this was always understood in the past, the same mistake has been made of late. Another

The path of those not ready for complete renunciation.

mistake is this. What is my method to reach the Ideal need not be yours. The life of the Sannyasin, as you all know, is the ideal of the Hindus and every one of us is enjoined by our *Shastras* to give up the world in the end ; and he who does not is not a Hindu, and has no right to call himself a Hindu. For he is then disobedient and disloyal to the ideal held up by his sacred books. Thus every Hindu who has tasted the fruits of this world must give up everything in the latter part of his life. For the ideal is—to give up after seeing and experiencing the vanity of things, to give up and go back to search the real after finding out that the heart of the material world is a mere hollow and that in its centre is only a handful of ashes. For the fact is that the mind is circling forward, as it were, towards the senses, and that mind will have to circle backwards ; that the *Pravritti* has to stop and the *Nivritti* has to begin. That is our ideal in life. But that ideal can only be realised after a certain amount of experience. We cannot teach the child the truth of renunciation ; the child is a born optimist ; his whole life is in the senses ; his whole life is one mass of sense-enjoyment. So also are the child-like men in every society who require a certain amount of experience and enjoyment, to see through the vanity of the life in the senses and then will renunciation come to them. There have been ample provisions for such men in our sacred books ; but unfortunately, in later times, there has been a tendency to bind every one

down by the same laws as those by which the Sannyasin is bound. A great mistake has thus been made and a good deal of the poverty and the misery that you see in India need not have been but for that. For such a man's life is hemmed in and bound down by tremendous spiritual and ethical laws for which he has no need at present. Let hands be off, let the poor fellow enjoy a little, and he will raise himself up and then renunciation will come to him by itself. In this line, gentlemen, we can perhaps learn something from the western people, but we must be very cautious in learning the same. For, I am very sorry to say that most of the examples one meets now-a-days, of men who have imbibed the western ideas are more or less failures. And if I am to choose between the two, the Scylla of old orthodoxy, and the Charybdis of modern European civilisation, I would vote for the former, and not for the Europeanised system. For, the old orthodox man may be ignorant and crude, but he is a man, nevertheless; he has faith and strength, and he stands on his own feet; while the Europeanised man has no backbone; he is a bundle of heterogeneous ideas picked up at random from every source—unassimilated, undigested and unharmonised. He stands not on his own feet and his head is always turning round. Where is the motive power of his work? In the patronising pats from the English people! His schemes of reform, his vehement vitu-

The cause of poverty in India and how it can be removed.

Avoid  
weakness,  
learn from  
all but be  
true to your  
ideal.

perations against the evils of certain social customs have, as the mainspring, some European patronage. Why are some of our customs called evils?—Because the Europeans say so!—And that is about all the reason he gives. I would have none of it. I would have you stand and die in your own strength. For if there is any sin in the world, it is,—weakness. Avoid it by all means. For weakness, indeed, is sin, and weakness, death. The old orthodox people were types of staunch manhood, while the unbalanced Europeanised creatures of the present times, are not yet formed into distinct beings and we do not know what to call them—men, women or animals. And there are still some glorious examples of such types of orthodoxy and such an one is here present before you in the Raja of Ramnad. Here, you have a man than whom there is none who is more a zealous Hindu throughout the length and breadth of this land and still here you have a prince than whom there is no prince in this land better informed in all affairs, oriental or occidental. He has harmonised his orthodoxy with whatever good there is in other nations and has accepted them all by following the law laid down by our great and peerless legislator, the divine Manu. For, has it not been said by him—“Learn good knowledge with all devotion from the lowest caste ; learn the way to freedom, even from the Pariah ; and take, even from the lowest caste and family, a jewel

of a woman in marriage"\* Take his example and learn from every nation, assimilate what you can and stand on your own feet. Take what is of use to you, and above all mind, that as 'Hindus,' everything that you accept from others must be subordinated to that national ideal of yours—spirituality. Each man has a mission in life as the result of all his past *Karma*. Again, each man is born with the mission to uphold the ideal that has grown out of the whole of the infinite past life of his own nation. Aye millions of ancestors are as it were, watching every action of yours, take care. And what is the mission with which every Hindu child is born? Have you not read the proud declaration of Manu regarding the Brahmin, when he says, the birth of the Brahmin is "for the protection of the treasure of religion"\* I would say that *that* is the mission not only of the Brahmin but of every Hindu child, whether boy or girl, born in this blessed land. Aye, each one of them is born "for the protection of the treasure of religion," and every other object in the Hindu child's life must be subordinated to that one principal theme. That is as it should be ; and the law that guides it has a strong resemblance to the law of harmony in music.

\* यद्विद्वानो यमं विद्यामाददीतावरादपि ।  
अन्त्यादपि परो धर्मः स्वीरव दक्षुलादपि ॥

† ब्राह्मणो जायमानो हि पृथिव्यामधिजायते ।  
ईश्वरः सर्वभूतानां धर्मक्षीपस्तु गमये ॥

There may be a nation whose theme of life is political supremacy ; religion and everything else must become subordinate to that one great theme of its life. But here in India, is another nation whose great theme of life is spirituality and renunciation, whose watchword is that this world is all vanity and a delusion of three days, and that everything in it, whether science or knowledge, enjoyments or powers, name, fame, or wealth, must be subordinated to that. The secret of a true Hindu's character is in that, in the subordination of his knowledge of European sciences and learning, his wealth, position and name, to that one principal theme. Thus the racial heritage of every Hindu child, is purity, spirituality and renunciation. Therefore between the two aforesaid cases of the crude, orthodox man who has nothing else besides a strong hold on the life-principle of the race, spirituality, and of the Europeanised man who full of undigested western ideas, has no hold on that principle, I doubt not that every one here present, will agree that we should choose the first case, of the orthodox man, because there is some hope in him. The former has something to hold on to, the national ideal ; so he will live ; while the other who has nothing to fall back upon will surely die. We see it everyday in cases of diseased persons, that where the principle of life is undisturbed and the principal function of it, normal, injuries received as regards any other functions are never serious—such injuries will never become perma-

ment. Likewise, so long as the principal function of our national life is not disturbed nothing can destroy our nation. But mark you, if you give up spirituality or leave it aside to go after the materialising civilisation of the West, the result will be that in three generations you will be an extinct race. Because, the backbone of the nation will then be broken, the foundation upon which the national edifice has been built will then be undermined, and the result will be a smash, an all round annihilation.

Therefore, my friends, the way out of the present national crisis is, that above everything else, we keep a firm hold on spirituality, the inestimable gift handed down to us by our ancient forefathers. Did you ever hear of a country, where great kings tried to trace their descent, not to kings, nor to robber-barons living in old castles and plundering poor travellers, but to semi-naked sages living in forest? Did you ever hear of such a land? This, indeed, is that land. In other countries great priests even, try to trace their descent to some old king, while here, the greatest of kings would trace their descent to some ancient priests. Therefore, whether you are naturally inclined to spirituality or not, for the sake of your national life, you shall have to secure your hold on spirituality first, and then stretch the other hand out to get what you can from other nations ; and everything that you get from them must have to be subordinated to that one ideal of life. Thus and thus alone, will come the wonderful and

In subordinating the western learning to spirituality, the national ideal, lies the birth of future India.



glorious future India, India greater than she ever was. And I am sure it is coming. Sages will then spring up greater than all the ancient sages, and your ancestors will not only be satisfied, but I am sure, will be proud to look down upon their descendants, glorious and great, from their positions in other worlds. Let us all work hard at it, my brethren ; this is no time to sleep. On our work depends the coming of the India of the future. She is there ready, waiting to come out. She has been sleeping, but is up and awake now. Let her be seated on her eternal throne, rejuvenated and more glorious than she ever was—this motherland of ours. And may He who is the Siva of the Sivaites, the Vishnu of the Vaisnavites, the Karma of the Karmis, the Buddha of the Buddhists, the Jina of the Jains, the Jehovah of the Christians and the Jews, the Allah of the Mahomedans, the Brahman of the Vedantists and the Lord of every sect, He who is all-pervading and whose blessed glory was revealed fully to this land first of all, He who, while appearing as the fighting clan-Gods to the various tribes of the Jews, the Arabs, and of other races of earth, manifested himself, in his infinite mercy to us in India, as the father, mother, friend, refuge and stay of the universe and as the soul of our souls ; may He bless and help us ; may He give strength unto us, to carry this idea into practice ; may that which we have listened to-day, become food to us ; may it transform itself into energy in us to help others ; and may

we, the teacher and the taught, never be jealous of each other! Peace, peace, peace, in the name of Hari.

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## VEDANTA AND THE SALVATION OF EUROPE.

(ADDRESS DELIVERED AT PARAMAKUDI).

Swami's  
love for his  
country.

It is impossible to express my thanks for the kindness and cordiality with which you have received me. Still, if I be permitted to say so, I will add that my love for my country and countrymen, will always be the same whether they receive me with such cordiality or spurn me from the land. For have we not been directed by Sri Krishna in the Gita, to work for work's sake only, and love for love's sake? The work that has been done by me in the Western world is, indeed, very little ; there is no one present here who could not have done a hundred times more than what I have accomplished ; and I am anxiously waiting for the day when mighty minds will arise, gigantic spiritual minds, ready to go forth out of this land to the ends of the world, teaching the ideas of spirituality and renunciation, which had their origin of old, in the forests of India, and belong to Indian soil alone. There come periods in the history of the human race when, whole nations are seized, as it were, with a sort of world-weariness, as they find their plans slipping away between their fingers, their old institutions and systems, crumbling into dust and their hopes, all blighted. Everything seems then to be out of joint and attempts are made to

Periods of  
world-weari-  
ness in  
history.

re-construct social life on new lines and principles. Of two such attempts that were made in the world's history one was founded upon religion, and the other, upon social necessity ; one upon spirituality, and the other, upon materialism ; one, upon transcendentalism, and the other upon realism. Of these, the former looks beyond the horizon of this little material world of ours and is bold enough to begin life there, even apart from the world ; while the latter is content to take its stand on the things around of this world, and expects to have a firm footing upon that. But curiously enough, at times the spiritual and then the materialistic solution of social life have prevailed in the world's history following each other in wavelike motions. And in the same country even, there is the influx at different times, of these two different tides. The full flood of materialistic ideas will come into a country at one time and make everything in this life prosperous by bringing in its wake the kind of education that will procure more food and more pleasure. And along with this prosperity will rise to white heat all the inborn jealousy and hatred of the human race, and competition and merciless cruelty will be the watchword of the day. A very common-place and not very elegant English proverb, "Everyone for himself, and the devil take care of the hindmost" will become the motto of the day. Then that flood will subside, that education degrade and degenerate the people, who will then think that the whole

Two  
foundations  
of Society.  
1. Spiritual.  
2. Material.

scheme of life has been a failure, and the world would be destroyed if spirituality does not come to its rescue and lend a helping hand. And then the people of that country will get fresh hopes, and find a new basis for rebuilding society—and thus a wave of spirituality will come into the country, to subside again, in its turn. For, as a rule, the tide of spirituality brings into existence a class of men who lay exclusive claim to certain special powers in that society and thus open the door to scores of other exclusive claims until the time comes when not only the spiritual powers of the race but all its material powers and privilege get centred in the hands of a few ; and these few, standing on the neck of the mass of the people, rule them. Then society has to help itself ; materialism comes to the rescue. The same thing is going on at present, in India, our motherland. The fact that you are here to-day to welcome one who went to Europe to preach your own national heritage, spirituality, would have been impossible had not the materialism of Europe opened the way for it. Indeed, materialism can be said to have come to the rescue of India, in a certain sense, by throwing open the doors of life to everyone, by destroying exclusive privileges of caste, and by opening up to discussion the inestimable treasures, hidden away in the hands of a few, when those few even, have lost the use of them. Half of the treasures has been stolen and lost, and the other half which still remains is in the hands of

**The present  
is an age of  
materialism.**

men, who, like dogs in the manger, will neither enjoy themselves nor allow others to do so. At the same time the political systems that we are struggling for in India have been tried in Europe for centuries, and have been found wanting. Institutions, systems, and everything else connected with political governments have been condemned there, one after another, as useless, and Europe is at present restless not knowing where to stand. The material tyranny has been tremendous. The wealth and power of the country are in the hands of a few who do not work, but who can manipulate the work of millions of human beings. By that power they can deluge the whole earth with blood. Religion and everything else, are under their feet. They rule and stand supreme. The western world is really being governed by a handful of Shylocks ; and everything that you hear about constitutional government, and freedom, and liberty and parliaments—are but jokes. The West is groaning under the tyranny of the Shylocks, while the East, under the tyranny of the Priests . and each must hold the other in check. Do not think, therefore, that the East or the West alone is to help the world. In this creation of the impartial Lord every particle has its place in helping the universe. The most demoniacal man has some virtues which the greatest saint has not and the lowest worm may have certain things which the highest man has not. The poor labourer, who you think has so little enjoyment in life, has not your

Evils of  
materialism.

intellect and cannot understand the Vedānta Philosophy, but at the same time, his body is not so sensitive to pain as yours and wounds in his body heal up more quickly than they do in yours. His life is in the senses, but he enjoys there more than what you can do. Therefore there is a state of equilibrium and an equal balancing of qualities in his life as compared with yours. So, the amount of physical, intellectual and spiritual capacity given by the Lord to every one is exactly the same, a defect in one balanced by the possession of another. Therefore you must not think that we or they alone, are the saviours of the world. We can teach the world a good many things, and we can learn from the world a good many things too. What we can teach the world is what the world is waiting for. For, the whole of the present western civilisation will crumble to pieces in the next fifty years if it does not find a spiritual foundation. It is hopeless and perfectly useless to attempt to govern mankind with the sword. You will find from history that the centres from which sprang up the idea of government by force, were the very ones to degrade and degenerate first of all and crumble to pieces. And thus, will Europe, the present centre of the manifestation of material energy, also, crumble into dust within fifty years if she is not mindful to change her position and shift her ground to make spirituality the basis of her life. And what will save Europe is the religion of the Upanishads. For, alike in all the different sects

Ruin and  
dissolution  
threatens  
Western  
Society.

Religion  
of the  
Upanishads  
alone  
will save  
Europe.

and philosophies and scriptures of India, there is underlying that common doctrine of the Upanishads, which alone can change the tendency of the western world, namely, the belief in the soul of man, the *atman*. It is there, everywhere in India, equally with the Hindus, the Jains, the Buddhists, and all the rest, the idea of a spiritual soul which is the receptacle of all power. For, you know well, there is no system of philosophy in India which tells you that you can get power,, purity, and perfection from outside. On the contrary, they all tell you that those are your birthright, your very nature. They tell you that impurity is a mere super-imposition, under which your real nature has become hidden. But the real *you* is already perfect, already strong. They tell you that you do not require any assistance to govern yourselves ; but that you are already self-restrained. The only difference is in knowing it or not knowing it. The one word that they use, therefore, to signify the thing that produces this difference, is ignorance. What makes the difference between God and man, between the saint and the sinner? Ignorance. In what lies the difference between the highest man and the lowest worm that crawls under your feet? In ignorance ; in that indeed, is all the difference. For inside that little crawling worm is lodged even now, infinite power, infinite knowledge, and infinite purity, in short, the infinite divinity of God Himself. It is unmanifested at present, and will have to be manifested. This is

The doctrine  
of the  
Atman.



The Science  
of Soul  
will bring  
strength.

the one great truth India has to teach to the world, because it is nowhere else. And this indeed, is spirituality, the science of the soul. Again, what makes a man stand up and work? Strength. Strength therefore, is goodness, and weakness, sin. And if there is a word that you find come out like a bomb-shell from the Upanishads, bursting upon our dark mass of ignorance, it is the word 'axi', or fearlessness. The Upanishads are the only scriptures that want to teach that everything in religion is contained in that word, *fearlessness*. For, whether in the field of worldly activities or in religion it is true that fear is the sure cause of degradation and sin. It is fear that brings misery, fear that brings death, fear that breeds everything that is evil. And what causes fear? The ignorance of our own nature. We are heirs apparent to the Emperor of Emperors ; we are of the substance of God Himself. Nay, according to the Advaita philosophy, we are God Himself ; but, we have forgotten our real nature for the present and are thinking of ourselves as little men with more or less differences amongst us. This knowledge of the soul is the great lesson India has to give to the world and, mark you, it changes the whole aspect of things ; because it makes you look at men and everything else in this world through other eyes and the world appears no more to be like a battle-field where each soul is born to struggle with every other soul, and where the strongest gets the victory and the weakest, death.

Outlook of  
the world  
through  
knowledge  
of Soul.

It becomes, then, a play-ground, where the Lord, like a child, is playing with us His playmates and fellow workers. Our life, indeed, is a play, however terrible, hideous and dangerous it may appear at present, and we have mistaken it for reality. But when we have known the nature of the soul, hope will come even to the weakest, the most degraded and the most miserable of us. Despair not, then, declares our Sâstra (scriptures), despair not. For you are the same whatever you do, and nothing in the world can change your nature. Even nature herself cannot destroy you. You are always pure. You may be covered up with ignorance for millions of æons, but your real nature is sure to assert itself and conquer in the end. Despair not therefore, there is hope indeed, for every one, so teaches the Vedanta. Its teaching is never through fear. It teaches not of devils who are always on the watch to snatch you if you miss your footing, but it says that your fate is always in your own hands. None else, but your own *Karma* has manufactured this body for you. None else, but you yourself have hidden through ignorance the soul, the Omnipresent Lord in you, and the responsibility is on your own self. Never think that you were brought into this world by some one else without your choice, and left alone to fight with all kinds of evils in this most horrible place ; but know it for sure, that you have done it all yourself, bit by bit, just as you are doing at this very moment. You eat yourself ; nobody eats for you.

Man's  
destiny in  
his own  
hands.

The all-  
compre-  
hensiveness  
of the  
Vedanta.

You assimilate what you eat ; no one does it for you. You make blood and muscles and body out of that food ; none else does it for you. Therefore, you must have done so all the time. For, if, is is true, that for the present, you manufacture your own body, it is true then, that you have done so in the past and will continue to do so in the future. That one link in the chain explains the whole chain. Thus, all the responsibility of good and evil is on you. And in this, there is the great hope, that what you have done you can undo. At the same time, our religion does not deprive mankind of the mercy of the Lord. That is there, for sure, all the time. Standing beyond this tremendous current of good and evil, He the bondless, the ever-merciful, is always ready to help us to the other shore. Great, indeed, is His mercy ; and it always comes to the pure in heart ! And the spiritual basis that this science of the soul offers to social life, is bound to be the basis of the new order of society, all over the world. If I had more time I could have shown you moreover, how the West has yet more to learn from some of the conclusions of the Advaita. For, in these days of the physical sciences, although the ideal of the Personal God does not count for much, yet if a man has a crude form of religion and wants churches, temples, rituals, images and a Personal God to love, it is the Vedanta alone that can satisfy him and his like ; it is there that we have such noble ideas of the Personal God as were never at-

tained anywhere else in the world. Again, if a man wants to be a great rationalist, it is the Vedanta that can give him the most rational idea of the Impersonal God, to satisfy his reason.

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## OUR DUTY TOWARDS VEDANTA AND INDIA.

(ADDRESS DELIVERED AT MANAMADURA).

I cannot express the deep debt of gratitude which you have laid upon me by the kind and warm welcome which has just been accorded to me by you. Unfortunately I am not in a condition now to make a big speech, howsoever I may wish it. For, in spite of the beautiful adjectives which our friend, the Sanskrit scholar here present, has been kind to apply to me, I have a body after all, foolish though it may be, and body always follows the promptings and conditions of the laws of matter. As such there is such a thing as fatigue and weariness as regards the material body. It is a sight to see the wonderful amount of joy and appreciation expressed, in every part of the country almost, for the little work that has been done by me in the West. I look at it from a different standpoint, and consider the results by applying it to the case of those who are coming in future. For, if the little bit of work that has been done by me gets such approbation from the nation, what must be the approbation that spiritual giants, world-movers coming after us, will get from this nation of ours! India is the land of religion, and the Hindu understands religion, and that alone. He has been educated for centuries in that line and the result is that it has become his one concern in life at present.

And well it is that it has been so. For, as it is not necessary that every one in a nation should be a shopkeeper, or a school-master, or even a fighter so is it with the different nations in the world. This world of ours, is indeed a world of harmony and the nations on its face should each contribute its own particular note to produce that harmony of result. And perhaps we are fated by the Divine Providence to play the spiritual note in that harmony of nations. What rejoices me therefore, in the welcome you have given me to-day, is my discovery of the fact in it that we have not yet lost the glorious traditions which have been handed down to us by the most glorious forefathers of whom any nation can be proud. It gives me hope, it gives me almost adamantine faith in the destiny of our race. It cheers me, not because of the personal attention paid to me but for the reason that I find from it that the heart of the nation is sound. Aye, it is still sound and India is still living ; who says it is dead ? The West wants to see us active like it. But that is not our field. If a nation wants to see us active in the field of battle it will be disappointed, just as we would be if we hoped to see a military nation active in the field of spirituality. But let a person look at it from the standpoint of spirituality, and he will find that the Hindu nation is living, equally active and alive as ever. It leads me, therefore, to dispel the idea that the Hindus have degenerated. So far so good. But now I have to say a few harsh words which I hope

The Hindus  
part in the  
harmony  
of nations  
is spiritual.

We are to  
be blamed  
for evils  
that have  
come into  
our nation.

you will not take unkindly. The complaint has been made that European Materialism has well nigh swamped us. It is not all the fault of Europeans, but a good deal our own. We as Vedântists must always look at things from an introspective standpoint, from their subjective relations. For we as Vedântists know it for sure that there is no power in the universe to injure us unless we first injure ourselves. One-fifth of the population of India have become Mahomedans, and Christians are already more than a million—just as in ancient times, two-thirds of the population had become Buddhists. Whose fault is it? In the ever-memorable language of one of our historians—Why should these poor wretches starve and die of thirst when the perennial fountain of life is flowing by? The question is, what did we do for these? Why should they become Mahomedans and Christians? I heard of a poor, honest girl in England who when going to become a street-walker for want and forbidden by a lady not to be so, gave reply saying, “that is the only way I can find sympathy, none will come to help me now, but let me be a fallen, down-trodden woman, and then the merciful ladies will come and take me to their homes and do everything they can for me, but not now.” Are we not behaving in the same way? We are weeping for them now, but what did we do for them before? Let every one of us ask ourselves, how often have we held the torch of hope in their path and how far did we carry it? That we did not

do it, was our own fault, our own *Karma*. Blame none for it, but your own *Karma*. Mahomedanism, or Christianity, could never have succeeded but that you allowed them. No bacilli can attack the human frame until it is degraded and degenerated by vice, bad food, privation, and exposure; the healthy man passes scatheless through masses of poisonous bacilli Aye, and we did not help them and this is the thing we should remember always. But yet there is time. Give up all those foolish old discussions and fights about things which are meaningless, which are nonsensical in their very nature. Think of the last six or seven hundred years of degradation, when grown up men by hundreds have been discussing for years whether we should drink a glass of water with the right hand or the left, whether the hand should be washed three times or four, whether we should gargle five or six times.

What can you expect from men who pass their lives in discussing such momentous questions and write big volumes on them? Aye, there is the danger at present of all our religion getting into the kitchen. We are most of us neither Vedântists now, nor Puránics, nor Tántrics. We are simply, "Don't-touchists," and our religion is in the kitchen. The cooking pot has become our God and our religion is "Don't touch me, I am holy." And if this goes on for another century, every one of us will be in the lunatic asylum. It is a sure sign of the softening of the brain when the mind cannot grasp the higher

Give up  
"Don't-  
touchism";  
and be  
strong and  
active.



## INDIAN LECTURES OF SWAMI VIVEKANANDA

Charity  
(Danam)—  
the one duty  
prescribed  
for the  
*Kali-Yuga*.

problems of life ; when all originality in it is lost ; and when loosing all its strength and activity, it goes round and round the smallest curve that it can find. That sort of foolish religion will have first to be thrown overboard. Then alone will you be able to stand up, active and strong, and then alone will you learn the use of the infinite treasure, that your forefathers have left for you, a treasure that the whole world requires to-day. The world will die if that treasure is not distributed. Bring it out, therefore, and distribute it broadcast. Says Vyâsa, giving alone is the one meritorious work in this *Kali Yuga*, and of all gifts, the giving of spiritual life is the highest one possible ; the next gift is, secular knowledge ; the next, saving the life of a man ; and the last, giving food to the famishing one. Of food we have given enough ; no nation is more charitable than we. So long as there is a piece of bread here, in the home of a beggar even, he will give half of it to the man who needs it. Such a phenomenon can only be observed in India. We have enough of that, let us go now for the other two, the gift of spiritual and secular knowledge. And if we are brave and have stout hearts, and if with absolute sincerity we put our shoulders to the wheel, in the next twenty-five years the whole of our problem will be solved. "There would be nothing left then of the want and misery which trouble us at present, and our motherland would become glorious once more. This is all I have to tell you now. I am not given much to

The giving  
of Spiritual  
and secular

talking about plans ; I rather prefer to do and show, and then talk about my plans. I have my plans, and mean to work them out if the Lord wills it; and if life is given to me. I do not know whether I shall succeed or not, but it is a great thing to take up a grand ideal and give one's whole life to realise it. For what is the value of life otherwise, this vegetating, little, low, life of man? Aye, subordinating it always to a high spiritual ideal is the only value that life has. That indeed, is the great work to be done in India. I welcome the present revival of religion in the land, for that reason, and would advise you not to loose the opportunity of striking the iron while it is hot.

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knowledge.  
will make  
India great  
again.

## **THE ETERNAL AND THE CHANGEABLE IN RELIGION.**

**(ADDRESS AT MADURA).**

I wish I could live in your midst for several days, and relate to you my experiences and the result of my labours for the last four years in the West. But, unfortunately, that is impossible at present ; and the continuous travelling and speaking that I have had to undergo for the last three weeks make it impossible also to make a very long speech this evening. I will therefore satisfy myself with thanking you very cordially for the kindness that you have shown to me and reserve those things for some day in the future when I shall meet with you again under better conditions of health and have more time to talk upon such subjects. The fact however, of my being in Madura as the guest of your well-known citizen and nobleman, the Raja of Râmnad, brings one thing prominently to my mind. Most of you perhaps are not aware that it was the Raja who first put the idea into my mind, of going to Chicago, and it was he who supported it all the time while I was in the West with his whole heart and influence. A good deal of the praise that has been bestowed on me in your address to me, ought, therefore, to go to this very noble man of Southern India. And I wish only that instead of becoming a Raja he had

become a Sannyâsin, for that is what he really is on account of his broad ideas and sympathies.

Wherever there is a thing needed in some part of the world the complement will find its way to that part to supply it with new life. This is true in the physical world as well as in the spiritual. So that, if there is want of spirituality in one part of the world, and at the same time that spirituality exists some where else in it, then no matter whether we consciously struggle for it or not, spirituality will find its way to the part where it is needed and balance the disturbed equilibrium. In the past history of the human race, it has been the destiny of India to supply spirituality to the world, not once or twice, but again and again ; and as such we find that wherever either by mighty conquest or commercial supremacy different countries have been welded into one, bequests have been made to it from one corner to the other of the world, each nation contributing its own quota, either political, social or spiritual. India's contribution to the sum-total of human knowledge has been spirituality and philosophy. These she contributed for the first time even long before the rise of the Persian Empire. She did so the second time during the days of the Persian Empire ; and for the third time, during the ascendancy of the Greeks, Again during the present ascendancy of the English, she is going to fulfil the same destiny for the fourth time. Western ideas of organisation and materialistic civilisation are penetrating and

Spiritual ideas flow into lands where they are needed.

India has given these ideas to the world's races whenever they met together.

The  
harmony  
of nations  
and how it  
will come.

pouring into our country, now-a-days, whether we will have them or not. The same way, however, Indian spirituality and philosophy are deluging the lands of the West. And the West can resist it no more than we can the onrush of some sort of material civilisation from it. A little of that is good for us while some spiritualisation is good for the West ; for the balance has be preserved between them. Therefore, it is not that the east should learn everything from the west nor the west from the east ; but each will have to supply what it has, for the future generations, and for the accomplishment of that dream of ages, the harmony of nations, an ideal world. Whether that ideal world will ever come into existence I do not know, whether that sort of social perfection will ever be reached I have my own doubts ; yet each one of us will have to work for the idea as if it will come to-morrow, and as if it depends only on one's own work alone. Each one of us will have to believe that every one else in the world has done his work and the only one remaining is himself, and if that one does his work the world will become perfect. This is the responsibility we have to take upon ourselves.

In India there is a great deal of revival of religion at present. There is a danger in it, as well as glory, for, revival sometimes breeds fanaticism, sometimes goes to the extreme, so that many times it is not even in the power of those who bring about the revival to control it when it has gone to a certain

length. It is better, therefore, to be forewarned. We have to find our way between the Scylla of old superstitious orthodoxy on the one hand, and on the other, the Charybdis of European materialism, of soullessness, of so-called reforms upon which lies the foundation of Western progress. These two have to be taken care of. In the first place, we cannot become Westerns, therefore, imitating the Westerns is useless. Suppose you can imitate the Westerns, that moment you will die, you will have no more life. In the second place, it is impossible. The stream of national life has taken its rise away, away beyond where time began, flowing through ages of human history ; do you mean to take hold of that stream, and push it back to its source, to the Himalayan glacier? So it would not be possible for you to be Europeanised. If you find it is impossible for the European to throw off the few centuries of culture which he has, do you think it is possible for you to throw off the culture of ages and ages? It cannot be.

The present Religious revival and the two dangers before it.

Again, most of us think that every little village-god, and every little superstitious custom is essential to our religious faith. But local customs are infinite and contradictory ; therefore, which to obey, and which not to obey? The Brâhmin in Southern India, for instance, would shrink in horror at the sight of another Brâhmin eating a bit of meat ; a Brâhmin in the North thinks it most meritorious if he kills goats by the hundred in sacrifice. As you are ready

Local customs mistaken for Religion.

to support your custom, so they are theirs. Various are the customs all over India, but these are local. The greatest mistake, therefore, is to think that in these local customs lies the essence of our religion.

The  
essentials  
and non-  
essentials  
of religion.

But beyond this there is a still greater difficulty.

There are two sorts of truths we find in our Sâstras, one that is based upon the eternal nature of man—the one that deals with the eternal relation of God and soul, and nature, the other that deals with local circumstances, environments and social institutions of the period, and so forth. The first class of truths is chiefly embodied in the Vedas ; the second in the Smritis, the Purânas, etc. We must remember that for all periods the Vedas are the authority, and if any part of the Purânas differs from the Vedas that part of the Purânas is to be rejected without mercy. Again, we find, that in these Smritis the teachings are different. One Smriti says this is the custom, and this should be the practice of this age. The next comes and says this is the practice of this age, and so forth. One says this is the *âchâra* which should be the custom of the *Satya Yuga* ; and, another says, this is the *âchâra* which should be the custom of the *Kali Yuga*. Now this is one of the most glorious doctrines that you have, that eternal truths, being based upon the nature of man, will never change so long as man lives ; they are omnipresent and universal. But the Smritis speak generally of local circumstances, of duties arising from different environments : and therefore they

The non-  
essentials  
change.

change with the course of time. So you have always to remember, that, because a little social custom is going to be changed you are not going to lose your religion. You must remember, that, customs have changed many times in the past. There was a time in this very India when, without eating beef, offered in sacrifices, no Brâhmin could remain a Brâhmin ; you read in the Vedas—how, when a great Sannyâsin, or a king, or a great man, came into the house they used to kill the best bullock ; how it was found later, that, for an agricultural race killing the best bulls meant annihilation of the species and harm to the racial occupation, and accordingly the practice was stopped, the voice was raised against the killing of cows. We find sometimes that what we now consider the most horrible customs existed once. Then in course of time other laws and those that exist now had to be made. The present ones, in turn, will have to go, and other Smritis will come. Thus, we come to learn the fact that the Vedas will be one and the same throughout, but the Smritis will change. As time rolls on, the present Smritis will go. Sages will come to change them and direct society into better channels, into new duties and into paths in accordance with the necessity of the age, without which it is impossible for that society to live.

I have told before that we shall have to guide our course in the present religious revival avoiding the two dangers of superstitious orthodoxy and



Western materialism, and I hope that every one of us here will have breadth enough, and at the same time faith enough, to understand what that means, that what I propose is inclusion of everything, and not exclusion. I want the intensity of the fanatic plus the extensity of the materialist. Broad as the ocean, deep as the infinite skies, is the sort of heart we want. Let us be as progressive as any nation that ever existed, and at the same time as faithful and conservative towards our traditions as Hindus alone know how to be. In plain words, we have first to learn the distinction between the essentials and the non-essentials in religion and in everything. The essentials are eternal, the non-essentials have value only for a certain period of time, and if after a time they are not replaced by something else they become positively dangerous. I do not mean that you should stand up and revile all your old customs and institutions. Certainly not ; you must not revile even the most evil one of them. Revile nothing ; even those customs that are now appearing to be positive evils were positively life-giving in times past, and if we have to remove these, we must not do so with curses, but with blessings and gratitude for the glorious work these customs have done for the preservation of our race. And we must also remember that the leaders of our societies have never been either generals or kings, but Rishis,—and who are the Rishis? The Rishi is a man who sees religion, to whom religion is not merely book learning, not argu-

The non-essentials were useful once and so not to be abused.

mentation, nor speculation, nor much talking, but actual realisation, coming face to face with truths which transcend the senses. And he has been called in the Upanishads to be not an ordinary man, but a *Mantra drashṭa*, a seer of truth. This is Rishihood, and that Rishihood does not belong exclusively to any age or time, or even to sects or castes. Vātsyāyana says truth must be realised—and we shall have to remember that you, and I, and everyone of us will be called upon in time, to become Rishis. And we must have faith in ourselves and be world-movers for every truth lies in us. We must see Religion face to face, experience it, and thus solve our doubts about it, and then standing up in the glorious light of Rishihood, each one of us will be a giant and every word falling from our lips will carry behind it infinite sanction of security, and before us evil will vanish by itself, without the necessity of cursing any one, without the necessity of abusing anyone, without the necessity of fighting anyone in the world. May the Lord help us, each one of us here, to realise the Rishihood, for our own and for the salvation of others.

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We must  
all be  
Rishis,  
seers of  
truth.

## VEDANTA—THE ONLY REMEDY FOR THE EVILS OF THE AGE.

( ADDRESS AT KUMBHAKONAM.)

Religion has  
been the  
life-prin-  
ciple of the  
Hindus.

“A very small amount of religious work performed brings a very large amount of result”\*—are the eternal words of the author of the *Gita*, and if that statement wanted an illustration, in my humble life I am finding that everyday. My work, gentlemen of Kumbhakonam, has been very insignificant indeed, but the kindness and the cordiality of welcome that have met me at every step of my journey from Colombo to this city are simply beyond all expectation. Yet, at the same time, it is worthy of our traditions as Hindus ; it is worthy of our race, whose vitality, whose life-principle, whose very soul, as it were, is in religion. I have seen a little of the world, travelling among the races of the West and the East ; and everywhere I find among nations one great ideal, which forms the backbone, so to speak, of that race. With some it is politics, with others it is social culture ; with others again it is intellectual culture and so on. But this, our mother-land, has religion and religion alone for its basis, for its backbone, for the bedrock upon which the whole

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\* “स्वल्पमप्यस्य वर्धस्य ब्रह्मते महती भवति ।”

building of its life has been based. Some of you may remember that in my reply to the kind address which the people of Madras sent over to me in America, I pointed out the fact that a peasant in India has, in many respects, a better religious education than many a gentleman in the West, and to-day, beyond all doubt, I myself am verifying my own words. There was a time when I used to feel rather discontented at the want of information among the masses of India, and the lack of thirst among them for information, but now I understand it. Where their interest lies they are more eager for information than the masses of any other race that I have seen or have travelled among. Ask our peasants about the momentous political changes in Europe, the upheavals that are going on in European society—they do not know anything of these, nor do they care to know ; but those very peasants, even in Ceylon, detached from India in many ways, cut off from a living interest in India, I found, had already known that there was a Parliament of Religions in America, and that one of their men had gone over there and that he had had some success. Where, therefore, their interest lies, there they are as eager for information as any other race ; and religion is the one and the sole interest of the people in India. I am not just now discussing whether it is good to have the vitality of the race in religious ideals or in political ideals, but so far it is clear to us, that for good or for evil our vitality is concen-

It cannot  
now be  
changed.

trated in our religion. You cannot change it. You cannot destroy one thing and put in its place another. You cannot transplant a large growing tree from one soil to another and make it immediately take root there. For good or for evil the religious ideal has been flowing into India for thousands of years, for good or for evil the Indian atmosphere has been filled with ideals of religion for shining scores of centuries, for good or for evil we have been born and brought up in the very midst of these ideals of religion, till it has entered into our very blood, and tingles with every drop of it in our veins, and has become one with our constitution, become the very vitality of our lives. Can you give religion up now without bringing in the same amount of a different kind of energy in reaction, and filling up the channel which it has cut out for itself like a mighty river in the course of thousands of years? Do you want that the Ganges should go back to its icy bed and begin a new course? Even if that were possible, it would be impossible for this country to give up her characteristic course of religious life and take up a new career of politics or something else for herself. You can only work under the law of least resistance, and this religious line is the line of least resistance in India. This is the line of life, this is the line of growth, and this is the line of well-being in India—to follow the track of religion. Aye, in other countries religion is only one of the many necessities in life. To use a common illustration which I am

Progress can  
only be by  
working  
along the  
line of least  
resistance.

in the habit of using, my lady has many things in her parlour, and as it is the fashion now-a-days to have a Japanese vase, she must procure it ; it does not look well without it. So my lady, or my gentleman, has many other occupations in life ; a little bit of religion also must come in to complete it. Consequently he or she has a little bit of religion. Politics, social improvement, in one word, this world, is the goal of the rest of mankind, and God and religion come in quietly as helpers to attain that goal. Their God is, so to speak, the being who helps to cleanse and to furnish this world of ours ; that is apparently all the value of God for them. Do you not know how for the last hundred or two hundred years you have been hearing a complaint again and again out of the lips of men who ought to have known better, that all the arguments that they produce against our religion being that our religion does not conduce to well-being in this world, that it does not bring handfals of gold, that it does not make robbers of nations, that it does not make the strong stand upon the bodies of the weak, and feed themselves with their life-blood. Certainly our religion does not do that. It cannot march cohorts, under whose feet the earth trembles, for the purpose of destruction and pillage and the ruination of nations. Therefore they say—what is there in this religion? It does not bring any grist to the grinding mill, any strength to the muscles ; what is there in such a religion? They

Enjoyment  
of the world  
is the goal  
of other  
races.

Why  
Hinduism  
is the true  
religion.

little dream that that is the very argument with which we prove the greatness of our religion. Ours is the only true religion because this little sense-world of three day's duration is not to be according to it, the end and aim above all, is not to be our only goal. This little earthly horizon of a few feet is not that which bounds the view of our religion. Ours is away beyond, and still beyond ; beyond the senses, beyond space, and beyond time, away away beyond, till nothing of this world is left there and the universe itself becomes like one drop in the transcendent ocean of the glory of the soul. Ours is the true religion because it teaches that God alone is true, and that this world is false and fleeting, and that all your gold is dust, and that all your power is finite, and that life itself is often times an evil. Ours is the true religion, because, above all, it teaches renunciation, and stands up with the wisdom of ages to tell and to declare to the nations who are mere children of yesterday in comparison with us Hindus, —who are heirs to the eternal truth, that our ancestors discovered for us here in India—to tell them in plain words, "Children, you are slaves of the senses ; life in the senses is trivial and evanescent ; the three short days of luxury here bring only ruin at last ; give it all up, renounce the love of the senses and of the world ; that is the way to truth ; through renunciation is the way to the goal and not through enjoyment." Therefore, ours is the only true religion. Aye, it is a curious fact that, while nations

after nations have come upon the stage of the world, played their parts vigorously for a few moments, and died almost without leaving a mark or a ripple on the ocean of time, here we are, living as it were, an eternal life. They talk a great deal of the new theories about the survival of the fittest, and they think that it is the strength of the muscles which is the fittest to survive. If that were true, some one of the aggressive nations of old would have lived in glory to-day, and we, the Hindus, who, they say, have never conquered one single race even, would have perished miserably. But, here is the race, which never conquered even one other race or nation, in the past, still living three hundred millions strong. And it is not at all true that all its energies are spent, that atrophy has seized upon every bit of its body ; that is not true. There is vitality enough, and it comes out in torrents and deluges when the time is ripe and requires it. We have, as it were, thrown a challenge to the whole world from the most ancient times. In the West they are trying to solve the problem how much a man can possess, and we are trying here to solve the problem on how little a man can live. This struggle to solve the life-problem will go on still for some centuries in the East and the West. But if history has any truth in it, and if prognostications ever prove true, it must be that those who train themselves to live on the least supply of things and to control themselves well, will in the end gain the battle, and that all those who run after



The world-weariness of the West can be cured only by the Vedanta.

enjoyment and luxury, however vigorous they may seem for the moment, will have to die and be annihilated. There are times in the history of a man's life, nay, in the history of the lives of nations, when a sort of world-weariness becomes painfully predominant. It seems that such a tide of weariness has come upon the Western World. There too they have their thinkers, great men ; and they are already finding out that it is all vanity of vanities, this race after gold and power. Many, nay, most of the cultured men and women there, are already weary of this competition, struggle, and brutality of their commercial civilisation, and are looking forward towards something better. There is a class which still clings on to political and social changes as the only panacea for the evils in Europe, but among the great thinkers there, other ideals are growing. They have found out that no amount of political or social manipulation of human conditions can cure the evils of life. It is a change of the goal itself for the better that alone will cure those evils. No amount of force, or government, or legislative cruelty, will change the mind of a race, but it is spiritual culture and ethical culture that alone can change wrong racial tendencies for the better. Thus these races of the West are eager for some new thought, for some new philosophy of life. The religion they have, Christianity, although good and glorious in many respects, has been imperfectly understood hitherto and found to be insufficient. The thoughtful men of the West find in

our ancient philosophy, especially in the *Vedānta*, the new impulse of thought they are seeking, the very spiritual food and drink they are hungering and thirsting for. And it is no wonder.

I have become used to hear all sorts of wonderful claims put forward in favour of every religion under the sun. You have also heard, quite within recent times, claims put forward in favour of Christianity by a great friend of mine, Dr. Barrows, that it is the only universal religion. Let me consider this question awhile and lay before you my reasons why I think that it is the *Vedānta*, and the *Vedānta* alone that can become the universal religion of man, and that no other is fitted for that rôle. Excepting our own, almost all the other great religions in the world are inevitably connected with the life or lives of one or more founders. All their theories, their teachings, their doctrines, and their ethics are built round the life of a personal founder from whom they get their sanction, their authority, and their power; and strangely enough upon the historicity of the founder's life is built, as it were, the whole fabric of such religions. And if one blow is dealt to the historicity of that life, as has been the case in modern times with the lives of almost all the so-called founders of religion—we know that half of the details of such lives is not now seriously believed in and that the other half is seriously doubted—if that rock of historicity, as they pretend to call it, is shaken and shivered, the whole

Vedanta alone is the universal religion of mankind.

Vedanta does not rest on any personality but on eternal principles.

building tumbles down, broken absolutely, never to regain its lost status. Each of the great religions in the world excepting our own, is built upon such historical characters ; but ours rest upon principles. There is no man or woman who can claim to have created the *Vedas*. They are the embodiment of eternal principles ; sages discovered them ; and now and then the names of these sages are mentioned, just their names ; we do not even know who or what they were. In many cases we do not know who their fathers were, and almost in all cases we do not know when and where they were born. But what cared they, these sages, for their names ? They were the preachers of principles, and they themselves, as far as they went, tried to become the embodiment of the principles they preached. At the same time, just as our God is an impersonal and yet a personal God, so is our religion a most intensely impersonal one, a religion based upon principles, and yet has an infinite scope for the worship of great personalities ; for what religion gives you more incarnations, more prophets and seers, and still teaches to wait for more such ? The *Bhagavad-Gita* says that Incarnations are infinite, thus leaving ample scope for many more to come in future. Therefore if any one or more of these persons in India's religious history, any one or more of these Incarnations, and any one or more of these prophets are proved not to have been historical, it does not injure our religion a bit ; even then it remains there firm as ever,

Yet it recognizes the usefulness of worshipping great personalities.

because it is based upon principles, and not on persons. It is vain to try to bring all the peoples of the world around a single personality. It is difficult to gather them together, even round eternal and universal principles. But if it ever becomes possible to bring the largest portion of humanity to one way of thinking in regard to religion, mark you, it must be always through principles and not through persons. Yet, as I have said, our religion has ample scope for authority and exercise of the influence of persons. There is that most wonderful theory of *Ishta*, which gives you the fullest and the freest choice possible among these great religious personalities. You may take up any one of the prophets or teachers as your guide and the object of your special adoration; you are even allowed to think that he whom you have chosen is the greatest of the prophets, greatest of all the *Avatâras*; there is no harm in that, but you must keep on a firm background of eternally true principles. The strange fact is here, that the power of our Incarnations has been holding good with us only so far as they are the embodiment of the principles in the *Vedas*. The glory of Sri Krishna is that he has been the best teacher of our religion of eternal principles and that his life has been the best commentary on the *Vedânta* philosophy.

The second claim of the *Vedânta* upon the attention of the world is that, of all the scriptures in the world, it is the one, the teaching of which is in entire harmony with the results that have been attained by

the modern scientific investigations of external nature. Two types of mind in the dim past of history, cognate to each other in kinship, form and sympathy, started to reach the goal through different routes. The one was the ancient Hindu mind and the other the ancient Greek mind. The latter started in search of the goal beyond by analysing the external world, and the former by analysing the internal world. And even through the various vicissitudes of their history, it is easy to make out two vibrations of thoughts, tending to produce similar echoes about the goal beyond. Now, we find the fact that the conclusions of modern science, that are but the development of the Greek thought, are acceptable as harmonious with religion, to the Vedānta alone, which is the outcome of Hindu thought. It seems clear, therefore, that modern materialism can hold its own and at the same time approach spirituality by taking up the conclusions on religion of the *Vedānta*. For, to all who care to know, the conclusions of modern science are the very conclusions to which the *Vedānta* reached ages ago through a different route ; only in modern science they are written in the language of matter. This, then, is another claim of the *Vedānta* upon modern Western minds, its rationality, the wonderful rationalism of the *Vedānta*. I have myself been told by some of the best scientific minds of the day in the West how wonderfully rational the conclusions of the *Vedānta* are. I know one of them personally who

Two methods of reaching the truth : The Greek and the Hindu, and how they can be reconciled.

scarcely has time to eat his meals, or go out of his laboratory, and who yet would stand by the hour to attend my lectures on the *Vedānta* ; for, as he expresses it, they are so scientific, they so exactly harmonise with the aspirations of the age and with the conclusions which modern science is coming to at the present time.

Two scientific conclusions of *Comparative Religion*, I would specially like to draw your attention to ; the one bearing upon the idea of the universality of religions and the other on the idea of the oneness of Being. We observe among the Babylonians and the Jews an interesting religious phenomenon. We find that both the Babylonian and Jewish peoples were divided into many tribes, each having a god of its own, and that these little tribal Gods had often a generic name. The gods among the Babylonians were all called Baals, and among them Baal Merodac was the chief. In course of time one of these many tribes would conquer and assimilate the other racially allied tribes, and the natural result would be that the God of the conquering tribe would be placed at the head of all the gods of the other tribes. Thus the boasted, so-called monotheism of the Semites was created. Among the Jews the gods went by the name of Moloch. Of these there was one Moloch which belonged to the tribe called Israel, and he was called the Moloch Yahva, or Moloch Yaveh. Then this tribe of Israel slowly conquered most of the other tribes of the same race,

Vedānta  
on Univer-  
sality of  
religion,  
and oneness  
of Being.

destroyed their Molochs, and declared its own Moloch to be the Supreme Moloch of all the Molochs. And I am sure most of you know the amount of bloodshed, of tyranny, and of brutal savagery that this religious conquest entailed. Later on the Babylonians tried to destroy this supremacy of Moloch Yahva, but could not succeed. It seems to me that such an attempt at tribal self-assertion in religious matters might have taken place on the frontiers of India also. Here too all the various tribes of the Aryans might have come into conflict with one another for declaring the supremacy of their several tribal gods ; but India's history was to be otherwise, was to be different from that of the Jews. India was to be alone, the land of all lands, of toleration and of spirituality, and therefore the fight between tribes and their gods did not continue long here ; for one of the greatest sages that was ever born, found out in India even at that distant time, which history cannot reach and tradition itself dares not peep into, —and declared the truth "He who exists is one ; the sages call him variously"—*Ekam sat vipra bahudha vadanti*. This is one of the most memorable sentences that was ever uttered, one of the grandest of truths that was ever discovered ; and for us Hindus this truth has been the very backbone of our national existence. For down through the vistas of centuries of our national life this one idea has come upon us, gaining in volume and in fulness till it has premeated the whole of our national existence, till it

Toleration  
the basis  
of our re-  
ligion and  
national  
existence.

has mingled in our blood, and become one with us. We love that grand truth for our country has become the glorious land of religious toleration through it alone. For it is here and here alone that they build temples and churches for the religions which have come in with the object of condemning their own religion. This is the great principle that the world is waiting to learn from us. Aye, you little know how much of intolerance is yet abroad. Many times I was very near being put to death on foreign shores owing to the prevalence of religious intolerance. Killing a man is nothing for religion's sake there ; to-morrow they may do it in the very heart of the boasted civilisation of the West, if to-day they are not really doing so. Outcasting in its most horrible forms would often come down upon the head of a man in the West, if he dared to say a word against his country's accepted religion. They talk glibly and smoothly here in criticism of our caste laws. But if you go to the West and live there as I have done, you will know that even the biggest professors you hear of, are arrant cowards and dare not tell, for fear of public opinion, a hundredth part of what they hold to be really true in religious matters.

Therefore the world is waiting for this grand idea of universal religious toleration. It will be a great acquisition to Western civilisation. Nay, no civilisation can exist long unless this idea enters it. No civilisation can go on growing before fanaticism stops, and bloodshed stops and brutality stops. No



civilisation can begin to lift up its head until we look charitably upon each other, and the first step towards that much needed charity is to look kindly upon the religious convictions of each other. Nay more, to understand that, not only should we be kind, but positively helpful to each other, however different our religious ideas and convictions may be. And that is exactly what we in India do, as I have just related to you. It is here in India that Hindus have built and are still building churches for Christians, and mosques for Mahomedans. That is the thing to do. In spite of their hatred, in spite of their brutality, in spite of their cruelty, in spite of their tyranny, and in spite of the filthy language they are always given to uttering, we will and must go on building churches for the Christians and mosques for the Mahommedans till we conquer them through love, till we have demonstrated to the world that love alone is fittest to survive and not hatred, that it is gentleness alone that has the strength to live on and to fructify but not brutality and physical force.

The world  
wants from  
India the  
grand idea  
of the spiri-  
tual oneness  
of the  
Universe. \*

The other great idea that the world wants from us to-day, the thinking part of Europe and the whole world, more perhaps the lower classes than the higher, more the masses than the cultured, more the ignorant than the educated, more the weak than the strong is that eternal grand idea of the spiritual oneness of the whole universe. I need not tell you to-day, men from Madras University, how the modern scientific researches of Europe have demonstrated

the oneness and the solidarity of the whole universe; how physically speaking, you and I, the sun and the moon and the stars, are but little waves or wavelets in the midst of an infinite ocean of matter, and how Indian psychology had demonstrated ages ago that, similarly, both body and mind are but mere *names* or wavelets in the ocean of matter, the *Samashti*, and how, going one step further, it is shown in the *Vedanta* that, behind that idea of the unity of the physical world, the real soul is also one. There is but one soul throughout the universe, all is but one existence. This great idea of the real and basic solidarity of the whole universe has frightened many, even in this country; even now it finds more opponents sometimes than adherents. I tell you, nevertheless, that it is the one great life-giving idea which the world wants from us to-day and which the mute masses of India want for their uplifting for none can regenerate this land of ours without the practical application and effective operation of this ideal of the oneness of Being. The rational West is earnestly bent upon seeking out the *raison d'être* of its philosophy and its ethics; and you know well that ethics cannot be derived from the mere sanction of any personage, however great and divine he may have been, of one who having been born but yesterday has had to die a short time after. Such an explanation of the authority of ethics no more appeals to the highest of the world's thinkers; they want something more than human sanction for ethical and moral codes

Spiritual  
oneness  
the only  
sanction  
for ethics.

to be binding, they want some eternal principle of truth as the sanction of ethics. And where is that eternal sanction to be found except in the only infinite reality that exists, in you and in me and in all—in the self, in the soul? The infinite oneness of the soul is the eternal sanction of all morality—that you and I are really one and not only brothers, as the literature of man's struggle towards unity have voiced it and even children have preached. This is the dictate of Indian philosophy. This oneness is the rationale of all ethics and all spirituality. Europe wants it to-day just as much as our down-trodden masses do, and this great principle is even now unconsciously forming the basis of all the latest political and social aspirations that are coming up in England, in Germany, in France, and in America. And mark it, my friends, that in and through all the literature voicing man's struggle towards freedom, towards real and universal freedom, you find again and again the Indian *Vedantic* ideals coming out prominently. In some cases the writers do not know the source of their inspiration, in some cases they try to appear very original, and few there are bold and grateful enough to mention the source and acknowledge their indebtedness to it.

Why I  
preach  
Advaita?

• My friends, when I was in America, I heard it once complained that I was preaching too much of *Advaita*, and too little of dualism. Aye, I know what grandeur, what oceans of love, what infinite, ecstatic visions and joy there are in the dualistic teachings

of worship of God through love. I know it all. But this is not the time with us to weep even in joy ; we have had weeping enough ; no more is this the time for us to become soft. This softness has been on us till we are dead ; we have become like masses of cotton. What our country wants now are muscles of iron and nerves of steel, gigantic wills, which nothing can resist, which can penetrate into the mysteries and the secrets of the universe, and can accomplish their purpose even if it meant going down to the bottom of the ocean and meeting death face to face in every fashion. This is what we want, and that can only be created, established and strengthened, by understanding and realising the ideal of the *Advaita*, the ideal of the oneness of all. Faith, faith, in ourselves, as well as faith in God, this is the secret of greatness. If you have faith in all the three hundred and thirty millions of your mythological gods and in all the gods which foreigners have now and again sent into your midst, and still have no faith in yourselves, there is no salvation for you. Have faith in yourselves and stand up on that faith and be strong ; that is what we need. Why is it that we three hundred and thirty millions of people have been ruled for the last one thousand years by any and every handful of foreigners who chose to walk over our prostrate bodies ? Because they had faith in themselves and we had not. What did I learn in the West, and what did I see behind those talks of frothy nonsense of the Christian religious sects saying that man was a fallen and

Because it  
brings faith  
in ourselves,  
which we  
want most.

hopelessly fallen sinner? There, inside the hearts of the nations of both Europe and America, resides the tremendous power of the men's faith in themselves. An English boy will tell you—"I am an Englishman, and I will do anything." The American boy will tell you the same, and so will every European boy. Can our boys say the same thing here? No, nor even the boys' fathers. We have lost faith in ourselves. Therefore to preach the *Advaita* aspect of the Vedanta is necessary to rouse up the hearts of men, to show them the glory of their souls. It is therefore that I preach the *Advaita*, and I do so not as a sectarian but upon universal and widely acceptable grounds.

The  
Advaitic  
doctrine  
not irrecon-  
cilable  
with the  
dualistic  
systems.

It is easy to find out the way of reconciliation that will not hurt the dualist or the qualified monist. There is not one system in India which does not hold the doctrine that God is within, the divinity resides within all things. Every one of our *Vedantic* systems admits that all purity and perfection and strength are in the soul already. According to some, this perfection sometimes becomes, as it were, contracted, and at other times it becomes expanded again. Yet it is there. According to the *Advaita* it neither contracts nor expands, but becomes hidden and uncovered now and again. Pretty much the same thing in effect. The one may be a more logical statement than the other, but as to the result, the practical conclusions, both are about the same; and this is the one central idea which the world stands in need of, and nowhere

is the want more felt than in this, our own motherland, Aye, my friends, I must tell you a few harsh words. I read in the newspapers, how one of our poor fellows is murdered or ill-treated by an Englishman, the howls go all over the country ; I read and I weep, and the next moment comes to my mind the question who is responsible for it all. As a *Vedantist* I cannot but put that question to myself. The Hindu is a man of introspection, he wants to see things in and through himself, through the subjective vision. I therefore ask myself who is responsible, and the answer comes every time, not the English ; no, they are not responsible ; it is we who are responsible for all our misery and all our degradation, and we alone are responsible. Our aristocratic ancestors went on treading the common masses of our country under foot, till they became helpless, till under this torment the poor, poor people nearly forgot that they were human beings. They have been compelled to be merely hewers of wood and drawers of water for centuries, so much so that they are made to believe that they are born as slaves, born as hewers of wood and drawers of water. And if anybody says a kind word for them, with all our boasted education of modern times, I often find our men shrink at once from the duty of lifting up the down-trodden. Not only so, but I also find that all sorts of most demoniacal and brutal arguments, culled from the crude ideas of hereditary transmission and other such gibberish from the Western world,

Our treatment of the masses... has brought in the present political and social condition in India.

are brought forward in order to tyrannise over the poor all the more. In the Parliament of Religions in America there came among others a young man, a Negro born, a real African Negro, and he made a beautiful speech, I became interested in the young man, and now and then talked to him, but could learn nothing about him. But one day in England I met some Americans, and this is what they told me—that this boy was the son of a Negro chief in the heart of Africa, and that one day another chief became angry with the father of this boy and murdered him and murdered the mother also, to be cooked and eaten and that he ordered the child also to be cooked and eaten, but the boy fled and after passing through great hardships, travelling through a distance of several hundreds of miles, he reached the sea-shore, and there he was taken into an American vessel and brought over to America. And this boy made that speech! After that, what was I to think of your doctrine of heredity! Aye, Brahmins! if the Brahmin has more aptitude for learning on the ground of heredity than the Pariah, spend no more money on the Brahmin's education, but spend all on the Pariah. Give to the weak, for there all the gift is needed. If the Brahmin is born clever he can educate himself without help. If the others are not born clever, let them have all the teaching and the teachers they want. This is justice and reason as I understand. These our poor people,

our present  
duties to-  
wards our  
masses.

therefore, require to hear and to know what they really are—these downtrodden masses of India. Aye, let every man and woman and child, without respect of caste or birth or weakness or strength, hear and know that behind the strong and the weak, behind the high and the low, behind every one, there is that Infinite Soul assuring the infinite possibility and the infinite capacity of all to become great and good. Let us proclaim to every soul—*Uttishthata Jagrata, prapya varan nibodhata*—“Arise, awake and stop not till the goal is reached.” Arise, awake ; from this hypnotism of weakness. *None is really weak* ; the soul is infinite, omnipotent, and omniscient. Stand up, assert yourself, proclaim the God within you, do not deny. Too much of inactivity, too much of weakness, too much of hypnotism, has been and is upon our race. O ye modern Hindus, dehypnotise yourselves. The way to do that is found in your own sacred books. Teach yourselves, teach every one his real nature, call upon the sleeping soul and see how it rises ; purity will come, and everything that is excellent will come when this sleeping soul is roused to self-conscious activity. Aye, if there is anything in the *Gita* that I like, it is these two verses, coming out strong as the very gist, the very essence of Krishna’s teaching.—“He who sees the Supreme Lord dwelling alike in all beings, the Imperishable in things that perish, sees indeed. For seeing the Lord as the same, everywhere present, he does not destroy

The preaching of the doctrine of the soul will bring strength to them.



the self by the self, and then he goes to the highest goal.”\*

The great work Vedanta has to do for India and the world.

Thus there is a great opening for the *Vedanta* to do beneficent work both here and elsewhere. This wonderful idea of the sameness and omnipresence of the Supreme Soul has to be preached for the amelioration and elevation of the human race, here as elsewhere. Wherever there is evil and wherever there is ignorance and want of knowledge, I have found out in my experience that, as our scriptures say, they all come by relying upon differences, and that all good comes from faith in equality, in the underlying sameness and real oneness of things. This is the great *Vedantic* ideal. To have the ideal is one thing, and to apply it practically to the details of daily life is quite another thing in every case. It is very good to point out an ideal, but where is the practical way to reach it? Here naturally comes the difficult question which has been uppermost for centuries in the minds of our people, the vexed question of caste and of social reformation. I must frankly let this audience know that I am neither a caste-breaker nor a mere social reformer. I have nothing to do directly with your castes or with your

समं सर्वेषु भूतेषु तिष्ठन्तं परमेश्वरम् ।

विनश्यत्स्वविनश्यत्तं यः पश्यति स पश्यति ॥

समं पश्यान् हि सर्वेषु समवस्थितमीश्वरम् ।

न हि कदाशास्मान्नास्मान् लब्धौ क्वचित् प्रयाति नरः ॥

गीता ।

social reformation. Live in any caste you like, but that is no reason why you should hate another caste or another man. It is love and love alone that I preach, and I base my teaching on the great *Vedantic* truth of the sameness and omnipresence of the Soul of the Universe. For the last one hundred years nearly, our country has been flooded with social reformers and various social reform proposals. Personally I have no fault to find with these reformers. Most of them are good, well-meaning men, and their aims too are very laudable on certain points; but it is quite a patent fact that this one hundred years of social reform has produced no permanent and valuable result appreciable throughout the country. Platform speeches have been sent out by the thousand, denunciations have been hurled upon the devoted head of the Hindu race and its civilisation in volumes upon volumes, and yet no good practical result has been achieved; and where is the reason for that? The reason is not hard to find. It is in the denunciation itself. In the first place, as I told you before, we must try to keep our character as a people which we have acquired by our Karma in the ages past. I grant that we have to take great many things from other nations, that we have to learn many lessons from outside; but I am sorry to say that most of our modern reform-movements have been inconsiderate imitations of Western means and methods of work, and that surely will not do for India; therefore it is that all our recent reform-movements have had no

Why social  
Reformation  
has failed  
in modern  
India?

The imi-  
tation of  
western  
means and  
methods of  
work will  
not do for  
India.

Growth and expansion on national lines and not reformation is the ideal.

result. In the second place, denunciation is not at all the way to do good. That there are evils in our society even the child can see, and what society is there where there are no evils? And let me take this opportunity, my countrymen, of telling you that, in comparing the different races and nations of the world I have been among, I have come to the conclusion that our people are on the whole the most moral and the most highly godly and our institutions are, in their plan and purpose, best suited to make men happy. I do not therefore want any reformation. My ideal is growth, expansion, development on national lines. As I look back upon the history of my country I do not find in the whole world another country which has done quite so much for the improvement of the human mind. Therefore I have no words of condemnation for my nation. I tell them "You have done well ; only try to do better." Great things have been done in the past in this land ; yet there is both time and room for greater things to be done. I am sure you know that we cannot stop. If we stop we die. We have either to go forward or to go backward. We have either to progress or to degenerate. Our ancestors did great things in the past but we have to grow into fuller life and march on even beyond their great achievements. How can we now go back and degenerate ourselves? That cannot be ; that must not be ; going back will lead us to national decay and death. Therefore, let us go forward and do yet greater things ; that is what I

have to tell you. I am no preacher of any momentary social reform. I am not trying to remedy evils, I only ask you to go forward and to complete the practical realisation of the scheme of human progress that has been laid out in the most perfect order by our ancestors. I only ask you to work to realise more and more the *Vedantic* ideal of the solidarity of man and his inborn divine nature. Had I the time I would gladly show you how every bit of what we have now to do was laid out years ago by our ancient law-givers, and how they actually anticipated all the different changes that have taken place and are still to take place in our national institutions. They also were breakers of caste, but they were not like our modern men. They did not mean by the breaking of caste that all the people in a city should sit down together to a dinner of beefsteak and champagne, nor that all fools and lunatics in the country should marry when, where and whom they chose, and reduce the country to a lunatic asylum, nor did they believe that the prosperity of a nation, is to be gauged by the number of husbands its widows can get. I am yet to see such a prosperous nation. The ideal man of our ancestors was the Brahmin. In all our books stands out prominently this ideal of the Brahmin. In Europe there is my Lord the Cardinal who is struggling hard and spending thousands of pounds to prove the nobility of his ancestors, and he will not be satisfied until he has traced his ancestry to some dreadful tyrant, who lived on a hill, and

The ideal of Brahmanhood and that every one should attain it is the real aim of the caste system taught in our scriptures.

watched the people passing through the streets, and whenever he had the opportunity, sprang out on them and robbed them. That was the business of these nobility-bestowing ancestors, and my Lord Cardinal is not satisfied until he can trace his ancestry to one of these. In India, on the other hand, the greatest princes seek to trace their descent to some ancient sage, dressed in a bit of loin-cloth, living in a forest, eating roots, and studying the *Vedas*. It is there that the Indian prince goes to trace his ancestry. You are of the high caste when you can trace your ancestry to a Rishi, and not before that. Our ideal of high birth, therefore, is different from that of others. Our ideal is the Brahmin of spiritual culture and renunciation. What do I mean by the Brahmin ideal? The ideal in which worldliness is altogether absent and true wisdom is abundantly present. That is the ideal of the Hindu race. Have you not heard how it is declared that he, the Brahmin, is not amenable to law, that he has no law, that he is not governed by kings, and that his body cannot be hurt? That is perfectly true. Do not understand it in the light which has been thrown upon it by interested and ignorant fools, but understand it in the light of the true and original *Vedantic* conception. The Brahmin is he who has killed all selfishness and lives and works to acquire and to propagate wisdom and the power of love. And for a country that is inhabited by such Brahmins altogether, by men and women

who are spiritual and moral and good, is it strange to think that it stands above and beyond all law? What police, what military are necessary to govern them? Why should any one govern them at all? Why should they live under a government? They are good and noble, they are the men of God, they are our ideal—Brahmins ; and we read that in the *Satya-Yuga* there was only one caste to start with, and that was that of the Brahmin. We read in the *Mahābhārata* that the whole world was in the beginning peopled with Brahmins, and that as they began to degenerate they became divided into different castes, and that when the cycle turns round they will all go back to that Brahminical origin. The cycle is now turning round, and I draw your attention to this fact. Therefore our solution of the caste question is not degrading those who are already high up, is not running amuck through food and drink, is not jumping out of our own limits in order to have more enjoyment ; but that it would come by every one of us fulfilling the dictates of our *Vedāntic* religion, by our attaining spirituality and by our becoming the ideal Brahmin. This is the law laid on each one of you here in this land by your ancestors whether you are Aryans, or non-Aryans, Rishis, or Brahmins, or the very lowest out-castes. The command is the same on you all, that you must not stop but go on progressing and that from the highest man to the lowest Pariah, every one in this country must try and become the ideal Brahmin.

This *Vedantic* idea of caste is to be practised not only by us but by the whole world and is meant for raising all humanity slowly and gently towards the realisation of that great ideal of the spiritual man who is non-resisting, calm, steady, worshipful, pure, and meditative. In that ideal there is God.

Good  
results  
can be  
realized  
only through  
love.

How are these things to be brought about? I must again draw your attention to the fact that cursing and vilifying and abusing do not and cannot produce anything good. They have been tried for years and years, and no valuable result has been obtained. Good results can be produced only through love, through sympathy. It is a big subject, and it will require several lectures to elucidate all the plans that I have in view, and all the ideas that are, in this connection, coming to my mind day after day. I must, therefore, conclude, only reminding you of this fact, that this ship of our nation, O Hindüs, has been plying here for ages for the good of humanity. To-day, perhaps, it has sprung a few leaks; to-day, perhaps, it has become a little worn; and if such is the case, it behoves you and I, children of the soil, to try our best to stop these leaks and holes. Let us tell our countymen of the danger, let them awake, let them mind it. I will cry at the top of my voice from one part to the other of this country to awaken the people to a knowledge of their situation and their duty therein. Suppose they do not hear me, still I shall not have one word of abuse for them, not one word of curse.

Great has been our nation's work in the past, and if we cannot do greater things in the future, let us have this consolation, let us all die and sink together in peace. Be patriots, love the race which has done such great things for us in the past. Aye, the more I compare notes, the more I love you, my fellow-countrymen ; you are good and pure and gentle ; and you have been always tyrannised over ; such is the irony of this material world of *Māya*. Never mind that ; the spirit will triumph in the long run. In the meanwhile let us work and let us not abuse our country, let us not curse and abuse the weather-beaten and work-worn institutions of our thrice-holy mother-land. Have not one word of condemnation, even for the most superstitious and the most irrational of its institutions, for they also must have served to do good in the past. Remember always that there is not in the world one other country whose institutions are really better in their aims and objects than the institutions of this land. I have seen castes in almost every country in the world, but nowhere is their plan and purpose so glorious as here. If caste is thus unavoidable, I would rather have a caste of purity and culture and self-sacrifice than a caste of dollar. Therefore utter no words of condemnation. Close your lips and let your hearts open. Work out the salvation of this land and of the whole world, each of you, thinking that the entire burden is on your shoulders. Carry the light and the life of the *Vedānta* to every door and rouse

Our future  
work de-  
fined.



up the divinity that is hidden within every soul. Then, whatever may be the measure of your success, you shall have this satisfaction, that you have lived, worked and died for a great cause. In the success of this cause, howsoever brought about, is centred the salvation of humanity, here and hereafter.

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## THE SECRET OF OUR NATIONAL EXISTENCE.

(SHORT SPEECH ON ARRIVAL AT MADRAS.)

We have heard it, always, that man proposes and God disposes. It was proposed that the addresses and the replies should be carried on in the English fashion. But here God has disposed otherwise—I am speaking to scattered audience from the chariot in the *Gita* fashion. Thankful we are, therefore, that it has happened thus. It gives a zest to the speech and strength to what I am going to tell you. I do not know whether my voice will reach all of you, but I will try my best. I never before had an opportunity of addressing a large open air meeting. The wonderful kindness, the fervent and enthusiastic joy with which I have been received from Colombo to Madras, and which it seems likely too, I will receive all over India, have surpassed even my most sanguine expectations. All this makes me glad for it proves the assertion which I have made again and again in the past, that as each nation has one ideal as the main-stay of its vitality, as each nation has its particular path to realise its own ideals which it is to become, so religion is the ideal and the particular path for the growth of the Indian mind. In other parts of the world religion is one of the many considerations, in fact it is a minor occupation. In England, for instance, religion is part of the national

**Religion is  
the ideal of  
the Indian  
nation.**

policy. The English Church belongs to the ruling class, and, as such, whether they believe in it or not, they all support it, thinking that it is their Church. Every gentleman and every lady is expected to belong to that Church. It is a sign of gentility. So with other countries, the ideal, the national power behind is represented in the case of each nation either by politics or some intellectual pursuits or by militarism or commercialism. There the heart of the nation beats ; and religion is one of the many secondary things which that nation possesses. Here in India it is religion that forms the very core of the national heart. It is the back-bone, the bed-rock, the foundation upon which the national building has been built. Politics, military power, even intellectual pursuits form a secondary consideration here. Religion is the primary consideration in India. I have been told a hundred times of the apathy for information there is among the masses of the Indian people ; and that is true. Landing in Colombo I found not one of them had heard of the political upheavals going on in Europe, the changes, the downfall of ministries, and so forth. Not one of them had heard of what is meant by socialism and anarchism, of this and that change in the political atmosphere of Europe. But that there was a Sannyasin from India sent over to the Parliament of Religions, that he had achieved some sort of success, had become known to every man, woman, and every child in Ceylon. It proves that there is no lack of

information, nor lack of desire for information where it is of the character that suits them, when it falls in line with the necessities of their life. Politics and all these things never formed a necessity of Indian life, but Religion and spirituality have been the one condition upon which it lived and thrived, and has to live in the future. A great problem is being decided by the nations of the world. India has taken up one side, and the rest of the world has taken the other side. The problem is this: What makes one nation survive and the others die? Should love survive or hatred? Should enjoyment survive or renunciation? Should matter survive, in the struggle of life, or the spirit? We think as our ancestors did, away back in pre-historic ages. In the remote past, the gloom of which even tradition cannot pierce, there, our glorious ancestors took up their side of the problem and having solved it threw their challenge to the world. Their solution is renunciation, giving up. Love and control of all desires are fittest to survive. Giving up the sense-life makes a nation to survive. As a proof of this, here is History telling us to-day of nations springing up and decaying like mushrooms almost every century—starting up from nothingness, making vicious play of their uncontrolled desires for a few days and then melting away, while this big, gigantic race, which had to solve some of the greatest problems of misfortune, danger and vicissitude, such as never befell in the history of any other nation of the world, survives even

Renuncia-  
tion not  
enjoyment,  
the secret of  
national  
existence.

now because it took the side of Renunciation and Religion. For without Renunciation how can there be any Religion? Europe is trying to solve the other side of the problem as to how much a nation can have; how much more power a nation can possess, by means whatsoever. Competition, cruel, cold and heartless, is the law of Europe, while ours is to stand by the spiritual caste-ideal, breaking competition and checking its forces, mitigating its cruelties, and thus smoothening the passage of the human soul through the miseries of life.\*

Friends, I am very much pleased with your enthusiasm. It is marvellous. Do not think that I am displeased with you at all ; on the other hand, I am intensely pleased at this evidence of your enthusiasm. That is what is required—tremendous enthusiasm. Only make it permanent ; keep it up. Let not the fire die out. We want to work great things in India. For that I require your help and such enthusiasm is necessary. It is impossible to hold this meeting any longer and address you on all sides of our problem in India. Therefore, you must content yourselves this evening with merely seeing me. I will reserve my speech for some other occasion when we shall exchange other thoughts and ideas. I thank you very much for your enthusiastic welcome.

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\* It was an open-air meeting and at least ten thousand people were present, and as the Swami could not make himself heard, he had to end his speech here with the words of the concluding paragraph.

## MY PLAN OF CAMPAIGN.

(DELIVERED AT MADRAS).

As we could not proceed the other day, owing to the crowd, I shall take this opportunity of thanking the people of Madras for the uniform kindness that I have received at their hands. I do not know how better to express my gratitude for the beautiful words in everyone of those addresses presented to me, than by praying to the Lord to make me worthy of the kind and generous expressions. May I work all my life for the cause of our religion, and our Mother-land, and may the Lord make me worthy of them. Gentlemen, with all my faults I think I have a little bit of boldness. I had a message from India to the West and boldly I gave it to the American and the English people. I want, before going into the subject of the day, to speak a few bold words to you all. There were certain projects going around me, trying to thwart me, oppose my progress, and crush me out of existence, if they could. Thank God they have failed, as such attempts will always fail. But there has been, for the last three years, a certain amount of misunderstanding, and so long as I was in foreign lands, I held my silence and did not even speak one word ; but now, standing upon the soil of my

Regarding  
the Theoso-  
phical  
Society.

motherland, I want to speak a few words by way of explanation. Not that I care what the result will be of these words—not that I care what feeling I shall evoke from you by these words. I care very little for that, because to-day I am the same Sannyasin that entered your city about four years ago with his staff and *kamandalu*, and that has the same broad world before him still. Without further preface, let me begin. First of all, I have to say a few words about the Theosophical Society. It goes without saying that a certain amount of good work has been done to India by the Theosophical Society; as such every Hindu is grateful to these people, especially to Mrs. Besant, for, though I know very little of her, yet what little I know has impressed me with the idea that she is a sincere well-wisher of this motherland of ours, and that she is doing the best in her power to raise our country. For that, the eternal gratitude of every true-born Indian is hers, and all blessings be on her and hers for ever. But that is one thing—and joining the Society of the Theosophists is another. Regard and estimation and love are one thing and swallowing everything any one has to say, without reasoning, without criticising, without analysing, is quite another. There is a talk going round that the Theosophists helped the small achievements of mine in America and in England. I have to tell you in plain words that every bit of it is wrong, every bit of it is untrue. We hear so much tall-talk in this

world, of liberal ideas and sympathy with differences of opinion. That is very good, but as a fact we find that one sympathises with another so long as the other believes in everything he has got to say, and as soon as he dares to differ, that sympathy is gone, that love has vanished.

There are others, again, who have their own axes to grind, and if anything arises in a country which prevents the grinding of their own axes, their hearts burn, any amount of hatred comes out, and they do not know what to do. What harm to the Christian missionary that the Hindus are trying to cleanse their own houses? What injury will it do to the Brahma Samaj and other reform bodies that the Hindus are trying their best to reform themselves? Why should they stand in opposition? Why should they be the greatest enemies of these movements? Why? I ask. It seems to me that their hatred and jealousy are so bitter that no why or how can be asked there. Four years ago, when I, a poor, unknown and friendless Sannyasin, was going to America, going beyond the waters to America, without any introduction, or friends there, I called on the leader of the Theosophical Society. I did so thinking that he being an American and a lover of India might provide me with a letter of introduction to somebody there. "Will you join my Society?"—he asked, "No," said I, "how can I? since I do not believe in most of your doctrines." "Then I am sorry, I cannot do anything for you."

The Christian Missionary and Brahma Samaj.



Was that paving the way for me? Let my theosophist friends here answer that. Then I went over to America as you know through the help of a few friends of Madras. Most of them are present here ; only one is absent, Mr. Justice Subrahmania Iyer, to whom my deepest gratitude is due. He has the insight of genius, and is one of the staunchest friends that I have, a true friend indeed and a true son of India. I reached America a few months before the Parliament of Religions began. The money I had with me was little and it was soon spent. Winter approached and I had only thin summer clothes. I did not know what to do in that dreary, cold climate for if I went to beg in the streets, the result would have been my being sent to the jail. There I was then with my last few dollars in my pocket. I sent a wire to my friends here in Madras. This came to be known to the Theosophists, and they positively exulted over my distress, saying, "Now the devil is going to die ; God bless us all." Was that paving the way for me? Let my Theosophist friends answer. I would not have told all this now, but, as my countrymen wanted to know, it must come out. For three years I have not opened my lips about these things ; silence has been my motto, but to-day the thing must come out. That was not all. I saw some Theosophists in the Parliament of Religions, and I wanted to talk and mix with them. I remember the looks of scorn which were on their faces, as much as to say—"What business has the worm to

be here in the midst of the gods?" So there again, it was not paving the way for me—was it?

After I had got some recognition for my work, in the Parliament of Religions, came tremendous work for me, but at every turn the Theosophists tried to cry me down. Theosophists were advised not to come and hear my lectures, for thereby, they were told, they would lose all sympathy of the society, because the laws of their esoteric section declared that any man who joined the section should receive his instruction from Kuthumi and Moria, whoever they be, and from them alone. Of course they are invisible, their visible representatives being—Mr. Judge and Mrs. Besant. So that, to join the esoteric section means to surrender one's independence; certainly, I could not do any such thing, nor could I call any man a Hindu who did any such thing. I have a great respect for the late Mr. Judge. He was a worthy man, open, fair, simple and he was the best representative the Theosophists ever had. I cannot pass any judgment, however, in the dispute between him and Mrs. Besant when each claimed that his or her Mahatma was right, while the strange part of the whole thing was that the same Mahatma was claimed by both. Lord knows the truth: He is the Judge and no one has the right to pass judgment when the balance is equal.

But thus it is that they prepared the way for me all over America! They joined the

other opposition, namely, the Christian Missionaries. There is not one black lie imaginable that these latter did not invent against me. They blackened my character from city to city, poor and friendless though I was in a foreign country. They tried to oust me from every house, and to make every man who became my friend my enemy. They tried to starve me out and I am sorry to say that one of my own countrymen took part against me in this. He is the leader of the reform party in India. Every word that I utter I am ready to back with evidences which are with me. The gentleman, I refer to, is declaring every day, "Christ has come to India." I ask him—Is this the way Christ is to come to India? Is this the way to reform India? And this gentleman I know from my childhood; he was one of my best friends; when I saw him—I had not met for a long time one of my countrymen—I was so glad, and this was the treatment I received from him!

The day the Parliament cheered me, the day I became popular in Chicago, from that day his tone changed and in an underhand way, he tried to do everything he could to injure me. Is that the way that Christ will come to India? Is that the lesson that we have learnt after sitting twenty years at the feet of Christ? Our great reformers declare that Christianity and Christian power are going to uplift the Indian people. Is that the way to do it?

Surely, if that gentleman is an illustration, it does not look very hopeful.

One word more, I read in the organ of these cultured reformers that I am called a Sudra and am challenged as to what right a Sudra has to become a Sannyasin. To which I reply—if my caste is that of the Sudra, then the editor's caste is that of the Pariah. I trace my descent to one at whose feet every Brahmin bows down every day with the words—*Yamaya dharma-rajaya chitraguptaya vai namah*, I bow down to Yama the Lord of all-righteousness, who keeps record of the good and evil deeds of everyone, he whose descendants the Kshatriyas are. If you believe in your mythology, or your Puranic scriptures, let these Bengalee reformers know that my caste, apart from other services in the past, ruled half of India for centuries. If my caste is left out of consideration, what will there be left of the present day civilisation of India? In Bengal alone my blood has furnished them with their greatest philosopher, the greatest poet, the greatest historian, the greatest archæologist, the greatest religious preachers ; my blood has furnished India with the greatest of her modern scientists. My caste that of the Sudra ! Then this editor, I again repeat, is a Pariah. He ought to have known a little of our own history, and to have known a little of our three castes, that the Brahmin, the Kshatriya, and the Vaisya have equal right to be Sannyasins ; the *Traivarnika* have

equal right to the Vedas. This is only by the way. I just refer to this, but I am not at all hurt if they call me a Sudra. It will be in the way of a little reparation for the tyranny of my ancestors over the poor. If I am a Pariah I will be all the more glad, for I am the disciple of a man, who, being the Brahmin of Brahmins, himself wanted to cleanse the house of a Pariah. Of course the Pariah would not allow him ; how could he let a Brahmin Sannyasin cleanse his house? So this Brahmin Sannyasin woke up in the dead of night, entered surreptitiously the house of the Pariah, cleansed his latrine, and with his long hair wiped the place. And this he did several times in order that he might make himself the servant of all. I bear the feet of that man on my head ; he is my hero ; that hero's life I will try to imitate. Thus a true Hindu should seek to uplift himself and the masses of his country, not by any foreign influence but by his own conduct, by becoming the servant of all. Twenty years of occidental civilisation brings the illustration of the man who wants to starve his own friend in a foreign land simply because this friend is popular, simply because he thinks that this man stands in the way of his making money. And the other is an illustration of what genuine orthodox Hinduism will do for her children at home. Let each one of our reformers be ready to serve all and cleanse the house of a Pariah even, and then I sit at the feet of one such and learn,

and not before that. One ounce of practice is worth twenty thousand tons of big talk.

Now I come to the reform societies in Madras. They have been very kind to me. They have given me very kind words, and have pointed out the fact, and I heartily agree with them that, there is a difference between the reformers of Bengal and those of Madras. Many of you will remember that I have told you very often that Madras is in a different position than Bengal just now. It has not introduced its reforms through the process of action and reaction as Bengal has done. Here there is slow but steady progress all through ; here is growth in reformation, and not reaction. But to a certain extent at least there is a revival in Bengal of customs and practices given up as wrong a few years ago. In Madras, there is growth, the natural process of growth in all its reforms to some extent. As such, I entirely agree with what the Madras reform societies point out as the difference between the reforms of the two provinces. But there is one thing which these societies do not understand, for some of them, I am afraid, try to intimidate me to join them. That is a strange thing for them to attempt. A man who has met starvation face to face for fourteen years of his life, who has not known what to eat the next day, and where to sleep, cannot be intimidated so easily. A man who dared to live where the thermometer registered thirty degrees below zero, almost, with scanty clothes and without knowing

Social  
Reform  
Societies  
criticized.

True method of reform is construction not destruction.

where the next meal was to come from, cannot be intimidated so easily in India. This is the first thing I will tell them—I have a little bit of will of my own. I have my little experience too and I have a message for the world which I will deliver without fear, and without care for the future. To these reformers I will point out that, I am a greater reformer than any one of them, for they want to reform only little bits, whereas, I want a root and branch reform. Where we differ is in the method only. Theirs is the method of destruction, mine that of construction. I do not believe in reform ; I believe in growth. I do not dare to put myself in the position of God and dictate unto our society, “This way you should move and not that way.’ I simply want to do my humble work like the squirrel in the building of Rama’s bridge, that was quite content to put on the bridge its little quota of sand-dust merely. That is my position. This wonderful national machine has worked through ages ! this wonderful river of national life is flowing before us through ages ! Who knows, and who dares to question whether it is good, and dictate how it shall move ? Thousands of accidental circumstances are crowding around it, giving it a special impulse, making it dull at times, and quicker at others. Who dares command its motion ? Ours is only to work, as the Gita says, and stand by contented. We can only feed it with the fuel it wants, but the growth is its own ; none can dictate its growth to it. Evils are plenty in our society. So are there evils in all

Evils exist everywhere.

other societies. Here the earth is soaked sometimes with widows' tears ; there, in the West, the air is poisoned with the sighs of the unmarried. Here poverty is the great bane of life ; there the weariness which comes of luxury is the great bane that is upon it. Here men want to commit suicide because they have nothing to eat ; there they commit suicide because they have so much to eat. Evil is everywhere, like chronic rheumatism. Drive it from the foot it goes to the head : drive it from there, it goes somewhere else. It is a question of chasing it from place to place ; that is all. Aye, children only think that they can cure evil and the way they propose is the true way. Our philosophy teaches that evil and good are eternally conjoined, the obverse and the reverse of the same coin. Have one, you have to get the other ; a wave in the ocean must rise at the cost of a hollow somewhere. Nay, all life is evil. No breath can be breathed without killing some being or other ; not a morsel of food can be eaten without depriving some body else of it. This is the law ; this is philosophy. Therefore the only thing to understand is that all our work against evil is more educational than actual, however big we may talk. Aye, this is the idea to be realised first, with respect to work against evil. It will make us calmer, and it will take fanaticism out of our blood. For the history of the world teaches us that wherever there have been fanatical reforms the only result has been that they have defeated their

Work  
against evil  
is more  
subjective  
than objec-  
tive.



**Fanatical  
reforms  
criticised.**

own ends. No greater upheaval for the establishment of right and liberty can be imagined than the war for the abolition of slavery in America. You all know about it. And what has been its result? The slaves are a hundred times worse off to-day than they were before the abolition. Before the abolition, these poor negroes were the property of somebody, and, as such, they had to be looked after so that they might not deteriorate. To-day they are the property of nobody. Their lives are of no value; they are burnt alive on mere pretences. They are shot down, no law for their murderers—for they are niggers. They are not human beings, they are not even animals; and that is the effect of such enforced taking away of evil by law or by fanaticism. Such is the testimony of history against every fanatical movement, even those with a motive for doing good. I have seen that. My own experience has taught me that. Therefore I cannot join anyone of these condemning societies. Why condemn? There are evils in every society; everybody knows it. Every child of to-day can stand upon a platform and give us a harangue on the evils in Hindu Society. Every uneducated foreigner who comes globe-trotting and takes a vanishing railway view of India, lectures most learnedly on the awful evils in India. We admit it. Everybody can show where evil is, but he is the friend of mankind who finds a way out of the difficulty. Like the drowning boy who was crying to the philosopher, when the philosopher was lecturing

him, "Take me out of the water first ;"—our people cry, "We have had lectures enough, societies enough, papers enough, where is the man who lends us a hand to drag us out? Where is the man who loves us really? Where is the man who has sympathy with us?" Aye, that man is wanted. That is why I differ entirely from the methods of these reform movements. A hundred years they have been here. What good has been done excepting the creation of a most vituperative, a most condemnatory literature? Would to God it was not there! They have criticised, condemned, abused the orthodox people until the orthodox people have caught their tone, and paid them back in their own coin, and the result is the creation of a literature in every vernacular in India, which is the shame of the race, the shame of the country. Is this reform? Is this leading the nation to glory? Whose fault is this?

Sympathy  
the true  
method of  
reform.

There is, then, another great consideration. Here in India, we have always been governed by kings; kings have made all our laws. Now the kings are gone, and there is no one left to make a move as before. The Government dare not; it has to fashion its ways according to the growth of public opinion. It takes time, quite a long time, to create a strong, healthy, public opinion with which the society will solve its own problems; and in the interim we shall have to wait. The whole problem of social reform, therefore, resolves itself into this: where are those who want reform? where are the

New San-  
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shape of  
public  
opinion  
must be  
created by  
education.

people? First make them ready else there would come the tyranny of a minority which is the worst tyranny in the world. Because a few men think certain things are evil that will not make a nation move, that is why the Indian nation does not move. First educate the nation, create your legislative body, and then the law will be forthcoming. First create the power, the sanction from which the laws will spiring. The kings are gone; where is the new sanction, the new power of the opinion of the people? Bring it up. Therefore, even for social reform, the first duty is to educate the people, and you must have to wait till that time comes. Most of the reforms that have been attempted for during the last century have been ornamental. Every one of these reforms only touches the first two castes, and no other. The question of widow marriage, for instance, would not touch seventy per cent. of the Indian women. All such questions only reach the higher castes of Indian people who are educated, mark you, at the expense of the masses! Every effort has been spent in cleaning their own houses, making themselves nice and in looking pretty before foreigners. That is no reformation. You must go down to the basis of the thing, to the very roots. That is what I call radical reformation. Put the  
• fire there and let it burn upwards and make a united Indian nation. The problem is not so easy. It is a vast problem before us; be not in a hurry, and, mark my words, this problem has been there for

these several hundred years. To-day it is the fashion, especially in these parts, to talk of Buddhism and its agnosticism as all good. Little do they dream that this degradation at present has been left by the later phases of Buddhism itself.

This is the legacy which Buddhism has left in our hands. You read in books written by men who had never studied the rise and fall of Buddhism that the spread of Buddhism was owing to the wonderful ethics and the wonderful personality of Gautama Buddha. I have every respect and veneration for Lord Buddha, but mark my words, the spread of Buddhism was less owing to the doctrines and the personality of the great master than to the temples that were built, the idols that were erected, and the gorgeous ceremonies that were put before the nation long after his passing away. Thus Buddhism progressed. The little vedic fire-places in the houses, in which the people poured their daily libations were not attractive enough to hold their own against these gorgeous temples and ceremonies and so the former gave way to the latter and people became Buddhists. But later on the whole thing degenerated. It became a mass of filth, of which I cannot speak before this audience, but those who want to know it will find its evidence in the sculptures of the big temples in Southern India. That is the sort of inheritance we have from the later Buddhists. Then arose the great reformers, Sankaracharya and his followers, and since his rising

The method adopted by Buddhism for reform is defective.

The way to true reformation is

through the  
evolution of  
the national  
mind.

to the present day, have been going on the slow bringing back of the Indian masses to the pristine purity of the Vedantic religion. These reformers knew well the evils which existed, yet they did not condemn. They did not say, 'All that you have is wrong, and you must throw it out.' It could never be so. To-day I read that my friend, Dr. Barrows, says that in three hundred years Christianity overthrew the Roman and the Greek religious influences. That is not the word of a man who has seen Europe and Greece and Rome. The influence of Roman and Greek religions is all there, even in Protestant countries, old gods coming in a new fashion only with changed names. They change their names only ; the goddesses become Marys and the gods become saints, and the same ceremonials come with new names ; even the old title of Pontifex Maximus is there. It proves that wholesale changes in religious reform can never be ; they are not easy of acceptance to the people. Sankaracharya knew it. And so did Ramanuja. Therefore the only other way left to them was to bring up the existing religion to the highest ideal. If they had sought to apply the other method they would have been hypocrites ; for the very fundamental doctrine of their religion is evolution, the soul going up towards the highest goal, through various stages and phases. And all these stages and phases, therefore, are necessary and helpful, and who dares condemn them ?

It has become a trite saying, and every man

swallows it at the present time without questioning, that idolatry is wrong. Aye, I once thought so, and as a penalty of that I had to learn my lesson sitting at the feet of a man who got his everything from the so-called idols ; I allude to Ramakrishna Paramahansa. Hindus, if such Ramakrishna Paramahansas are produced by idol worship, what will you have—the reformer's creed or any number of 'idols'? I want an answer. Take a thousand 'idols' more if you can produce Ramakrishna Paramahansas through 'idol worship'. God speed you! Produce such noble natures by any means you can. 'Idolatry' is condemned!—Why? Nobody knows, except that some hundreds of years ago some man of Jewish blood happened to condemn it, that is, he happened to condemn everybody else's idols except his own! If God is represented in any beautiful form, or any symbolic form, said the Jew, it is awfully bad ; it is sin. But if he is represented in the form of a chest, with two angels sitting on each side, and a cloud hanging over it, it is the Holy of Holies! If God comes in the form of a dove, it is, the Holy of Holies! But if he comes in the form of a cow, it is heathen superstition ; condemn it. That is how the world goes. That is why the poet says, "what fools we mortals be!" That is why it is difficult to look through each other's eyes, and that is the bane of humanity. That is the basis of hatred and jealousy, of quarrel and of fight. Boys, mustached babies, who never went out of Madras, standing up

Represent-  
ation of God  
in symbolic  
form help-  
ful.

and wanting to dictate laws to three hundred millions of people, with thousands of traditions at their back! Are you not ashamed? Stand back from such blasphemy, and learn your lessons first! Irreverent boys, simply because you can scrawl a few lines upon a paper and get some fool to publish it for you, you think you are the educators of the world, you think you voice the public opinion of India—is it so? Therefore, this I have to tell to the social reformers of Madras, that I have the greatest respect and love for them. I respect and love the social reformers of Madras for their love for their country, for the poor, and for the oppressed, but what I would tell them with a brother's love is that their method is not right. That method has been tried a hundred years and has failed. Let us try some new method now. Did India stand in want of reformers ever? Do you read the history of India? Who was Ramanuja? Who was Sankara? Who was Nanak? Who was Chaitanya? Who was Kabir? Who was Dadu? Who were all these great preachers, one following the other, a galaxy of stars of the first magnitude? Did not Ramanuja feel for the lower classes? Did he not try all his life to admit even the Pariah to his community. Did he not try to admit even Mahomedans to his own fold? Did not Nanak confer with Hindus and Mahomedans, and try to bring about a new state of things? They all tried, and their work is going on still. The difference is this. They had not the fanfaronade of

The method of our great Reformers of old was to induce growth by love and sympathy and not condemnation.

the reformers of to-day ; they had no curses on their lips as modern reformers have ; their lips pronounced only blessings. They never condemned. They said unto the people that the race must always grow. They looked back and they said, "O Hindus, what you have done is good, but, my brothers, let us do better." They did not say, "You have been wicked, now let us be good." They said, "You have been good, but let us now be better." That makes a whole world of difference. We must grow according to our nature. Vain it is to attempt the modes of action foreign societies have engrafted upon us ; it is impossible. And glory unto God, that it is impossible, that we cannot be twisted and tortured into the shape of other nations. I do not condemn the institutions of other races ; they are good for them, but not for us. What is meat for them may be poison for us. This is the first lesson to learn. With other sciences, other institutions, and other traditions behind them, they have come to their present systems. We, with our traditions, with thousands of years of *Karma* behind us can only follow our own bent, run in our own spheres, and that we must have to do.

What is my plan then ? My plan is to follow the ideas of the great masters of old. I have studied their work, and it has been given unto me to discover the line of action they took. They were the great originators of Society. They were the great givers of strength, and of purity, and of life. They did most marvellous work. We have to do marvellous

My plan is to follow the great masters who built our society in the past.



work also. Circumstances have changed ; for that the lines of action have to be changed a little, and that is all. I see that each nation, like each individual, has one central theme in its life, one principal note around which every other note comes to form the harmony. One nation has political power as its vitality, as it is in England. Another has artistic life and so on. In India religious life forms the centre, the keynote of the music of national life, and if any nation attempts to cut loose from its centre, the direction which has become its own through the transmission of centuries,—that nation dies if it succeeds in the attempt. Therefore, if you succeed in the attempt to throw off your religion and take up either politics or society or any other thing as the vital centre of your national life, the result will be that you will become extinct. To prevent that, you must in all and everything work through your religion. Let all your nerves vibrate in harmony to that central chord. Let religion be your backbone. I have seen that I cannot preach religion in America without showing them its practical effect on social life. I could not preach religion in England without showing the wonderful political changes the *Vedanta* would bring. So, in India, social reform has to be preached by showing how much more spiritual life the new system will bring, and politics has to be preached by showing how much it will improve the one thing the nation wants, its spirituality. Every man has his

Reformation  
in India to be  
introduced  
through religion,  
the secret of our  
national life.

own choice ; so has every nation. We made our choice ages ago and we must abide by it. And, after all, it is not such a bad choice. Is it such a bad choice in this world to think not of matter but spirit, not of man but God? That intense faith in another world, that intense hatred for this world, that intense power of renunciation, that intense faith in God, that intense faith in the immortal soul are in you through the transmission of centuries. I challenge any one to give them up. You cannot. You may try to impose upon me by becoming materialists, talking materialism for a few months, but I know what you are ; you come face to face with a spiritual life and back you come again, as good theists as ever were born. How can you change your nature?

So every improvement in India requires first of all an upheaval in religion. To flood India with socialistic or political ideas, first deluge the land with spiritual ideas ; that is the first thing to be done. The first work that demands our attention is that the wonderful truths confined in our Upanishads, in our Scriptures, in our Puranas—most marvellous truths—must be brought out from the possession of select bodies of people, and scattered broadcast all over the land, so that they spread all over the country, from north to south, and east to west, from Himalayas to Comorin, from the Sindhu to the Brahmaputra. Every one must know of them because it is said,—“This has first to be heard, then thought upon, and then medi-

The spread of the truth of the Upanishads necessary before all reforms.

tated.”\* Let the people hear first, and whoever helps in making the people hear about the great truths in their own scriptures, will do a meritorious *karma* today that will never be equalled by anything else that they can do. It has been said by Manu that in this *kaliyuga* there is but one *karma* left to perfect one's self ; the sacrifices and tremendous Tapasyas of other yugas being of no avail now.† That is the

For the duty of giving is the one duty enjoined on us by Manu in this yuga.

*karma* of giving. Again, of all gifts, the gift of spirituality or spiritual knowledge is the highest ; the next in gift is the gift of secular knowledge ; the next is the gift of life ; and the fourth, the gift of food. Thus said Manu and the people here are still abiding by it. Look at this wonderfully charitable race ; look at the amount of gifts that are made in this poor, poor country ; look at the hospitality of the land, where a man can travel from the north to the south receiving the best of everything just as if among friends, the land where no beggar starves so long as there is a piece of bread anywhere in it.

Now a few words about the energy which manifests itself as the first one of the charities, the diffusion of spiritual knowledge. The diffusion should not be confined within the bounds of India ; it must go out all over the world. That has been the custom. Those that tell you that Indian thought

Diffusion of spiritual knowledge is India's mission to the world.

\* “ श्रोतव्यी मन्तव्यी निदिध्यासितव्यी । ”

† “ तपः परं कृते युने देतायां ज्ञानमुच्यते ।

हापरे यज्ञनिवाहुः दाननिर्ण कश्चौ युने । ”

never went outside of India, those that tell you that I am the first Sannyasin who went to foreign lands to preach, do not know the history of their own race. Again and again this phenomenon has happened. Whenever the world has required it, the perennial spring of spirituality has overflowed and flooded it, from India. Gifts of political constitution have had to be made often with the blast of trumpets, and the march of cohorts. Gifts of secular knowledge and new social institutions have had to be made sometimes with fire and sword ; but gifts of spiritual knowledge can only be imparted in silence ; it is like the dew that falls unseen and unheard, and brings into bloom masses of roses. Such has been the gift of India to the world again and again. Whenever there has been a great conquering race, bringing the nations of the world together, making communications possible among them, India arose immediately and gave her gift of spirituality ; thus adding to the sum-total of the progress of the world. This happened in ages before and after Buddha was born and the remnants of it are still left in China, in Asia Minor, and in the heart of the Malayan Archipelago. This was the case when the great Greek conqueror united the four corners of the then known world. Indian spirituality flooded it at the time, and the boasted civilisation of the West is but the little remnant of that deluge. The same opportunity has come now ; the power of England has linked the nations of the world together as was never done

before. English roads and channels of communication run from one end of the world to the other. Owing to English genius, the world to-day has been linked in such a fashion as has never before been done. Trade centres have been formed to-day, such as never were in the history of mankind, and immediately, consciously or unconsciously, rises up India and pours forth her gifts of spirituality. And they must rush through these roads till they reach the very ends of the world. That I went to America was not my doing, or your doing, but the God of India, who is guiding its destiny, sent me and will send hundreds like me to all the nations of the world. No power on earth can resist it. Therefore, this has to be done. You must go out to preach your religion, preach it to every nation under the sun, preach it to every people. And along with preaching spiritual knowledge, will come that secular knowledge and every other knowledge you want ; but if you attempt to get the secular knowledge without religion, I tell you plainly, vain is your attempt, in India it will never have hold on the people. Even the great Buddhistic movement was a failure partly on account of that. Therefore, my friends, my plan is to start institutions in India, to train our young men, to make them preachers of the truths of our scriptures, inside India and outside India. Men, strong and sincere to be the backbone, vigorous and believing young men are wanted, everything else will be ready. A hundred such and the

To fulfil  
that duty\*  
men are  
wanted.

world becomes revolutionised, for the will of such men is stronger than anything else. Everything must go down before their will, for a pure and strong will is omnipotent and comes from God and God Himself. And preach, preach unto your countrymen and the nations of the world, the great truths of your religion; the world waits for them. People have been taught theories of degradation for centuries. They have been told all over the world that they are not human beings. They have been frightened so for centuries till they have nearly become animals. Never were they allowed to hear of the *Atman*. Let them hear of the *Atman*—that even the lowest of the low have the *Atman* inside, which never dies and never is born, of Him whom the sword cannot pierce, nor the fire burn, nor the air dry, immortal, without beginning or end, the all-pure, omnipotent and omnipresent *Atman*! Therefore, preach the *Atman* and have faith in yourselves. For what makes the difference between the Englishman and you? Let him talk of religion and duty and so forth, but I have found the difference. The difference is here, that the Englishman believes in himself, and you do not. He believes in his being an Englishman and he believes he can do anything. That brings out the God within him and he can do anything he likes. You have been told and taught that you can do nothing, and non-entities you are becoming every day. Therefore, believe in yourselves. What we want is strengthening. We have become weak, and that is

Men of strong will with Faith in themselves and not mystery-mongers, are wanted.

Truth brings  
strength,  
purity and  
knowledge.

why such creepy things as occultism and so forth come to us ; there may be great truths in them, but they have nearly destroyed us. Make your nerves strong. What we want are muscles of iron and nerves of steel. We have wept long. No more weeping, but stand on your feet and be men. It is man-making religion that we want. It is man-making theories that we want. It is man-making education all round that we want. And here is the test of truth—anything that makes you weak physically, intellectually and spiritually, reject it as poison, there is no life in it, it cannot be true. Truth is strengthening. Truth is purity. Truth is all knowledge. Therefore truth must strengthen, enlighten, and invigorate. Mystery-mongering, in spite of some grains of truth in it, is generally weakening. Believe me, I have my life-long experience for it, I have travelled every inch of India, searched many a cave, lived in the Himalayas and known people who were there all their lives, and the one conclusion that I draw is that such things are weakening. I love my nation and I cannot see you degraded, weakened any more, weak that you are now. Therefore I am bound for your sake and for truth's sake to cry, "Hold!" and to raise my voice against this degradation of my race.

• Stop where you are ; be strong. Go back to your Upanishads, the shining, the strengthening, the lofty philosophy of the Upanishads, and part from all these occult things, which are weakening. Take up this philosophy and the simple truths contained

in it. For believe me, the greatest truths are the simplest things in the world, simple as your own existence. Before you stand these truths of the Upanishads. Take them up, live up to them and the salvation of India will be found.

One word more and I have finished. They talk of patriotism. I believe in patriotism. I have my own ideal of patriotism also. Three things are necessary for great achievements. First feel from the heart. What is in the intellect? Reason? It goes a few steps and there it stops. But through the heart comes inspiration. Love opens the most impossible gates; love is the gate to all the secrets of the universe. Feel, therefore, my would-be-reformers, would-be patriots. Do you feel? Do you feel that millions and millions of the descendants of gods and of sages have become next-door neighbours to brutes? Do you feel that millions are starving to-day, and millions have been starving for ages? Do you feel that ignorance has overcast the land as a dark cloud? Does it make you restless? Does it make you sleepless? Has it gone into your blood, and coursing through your veins become consonant with your heart-beats? Has it made you almost mad, are you seized with that one idea of the misery, of the ruin, and have forgotten all about your name, all about your fame, your wives, your children, your property, even your own bodies? Have you done that? That is the first step to become a patriot, the very first step. I did not go to America, as most

Three things  
necessary to  
become a  
real patriot.

(1) Intense  
and deep  
love



of you know, for the Parliament of Religions, but because this demon of a feeling was in me and within my soul. I travelled twelve years all over India, finding no way how to work, and that is why I went to America. Most of you know it who knew me then. Who cares about this Parliament of Religions? Here are my own flesh and blood sinking every day, and who cares for them?

(2) absence  
of fanaticism  
and abuse.

Admitting that you feel, have you found any way out, some practical solution, instead of spending your energies in frothy talk; some helpful method instead of condemnation, some sweet words to soothe the miseries of the people and bring them out of this living death? Yet that is not all. Have you got the will to surmount mountain-high obstructions? If the whole world stands against you sword in hand, would you dare still do what you think is right? If your children are against you, and your wives, if all your money goes, your name dies away, your wealth vanishes, would you still stick to it? Would you still pursue it and go on steadily towards your own goal; as the great King Bhartrihari says—"Let the sages blame or let them praise; let the goddess of fortune come or let her go wherever she likes; let death come to-day, or let it come in hundreds of years; he indeed is the steady man who does not move one inch from the way of truth."<sup>1</sup> Have you got that steadfastness?

(3) strong  
will and  
steady  
action.

\* निम्नलिखितानि विषयाः यदि वा सुवचनं

वचनैः सुनायितव्यं नन्दनं वा वचनैः

If you have these three things each one of you will work miracles; you need not write in the newspapers; you need not go about lecturing. Your very face will shine. If you live in a cave your thoughts will permeate even through the stone walls, go vibrating all over the world for hundreds of years, may be, until they will catch hold of some brain, and work themselves out there. Such is the power of thought, of sincerity, and of purity of purpose.

One word more. I am afraid I am delaying you. This national ship, my countrymen, my friends, my children—this national ship has been ferrying millions and millions of souls across the waters of life. For scores of shining centuries it has been plying across this water, and millions of souls have been taken to the other shore, to blessedness, through its agency. But to-day, perhaps through your own fault, this boat has sprung a leak, and become a little damaged—would you curse it? Is it fit that you stand up and pronounce malediction upon it, which has done more work than any other thing in the world? If there are holes in this national ship, this society of ours, we are its children. Let us go and stop the holes. Let us gladly do it with our hearts' blood, if we cannot, let us die. So let us lay our brains together to repair the ship but not condemn it. Say

Our duty is to make the nation stronger or die in the attempt,—and not to condemn it.

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बचोव वा मरचनसु दुनाकरे वा

आकात् पयात् प्रविचकनि पई न चीराः ।

बीतिअतक ।

not one harsh word against this society. I love it for its past greatness. I love you all because you are the children of gods, you are the children of glorious forefathers. All blessings be on you! Curse you! Never. I have come to you, my children, to tell you all my plans. If you hear them I am ready to work with you. If you hear them not, and kick me out of India, I will come back still and tell you—we are all sinking, I am come now to remain with you, and, if we are to sink, let us all sink together, and never let curses rise to our lips.

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## VEDANTA IN ITS APPLICATION TO INDIAN LIFE.

( ADDRESS DELIVERED AT MADRAS ).

There is a word which has become very common as an appellation of our race and our Religion. I mean the word "Hindu," which requires a little explanation in connection with what I mean by Vedantism. This word "Hindu" was the name that the ancient Persians used to apply to the river Sindhu. Wherever in Sanskrit there is an "S", in ancient Persian or Zend it changes into "H", so that "Sindhu" became "Hindu" ; and you are all aware how the Greeks found it hard to pronounce "H" and dropped it altogether, so that we became Indians to them. Now this word, whatever might have been its meaning in ancient times as the inhabitants of the other side of the Indus, has lost all its force in modern times ; for all the people that live on this side of the Indus no longer belong to one religion. There are the Hindus proper, the Mahomedans, the Parsees, the Christians and some Buddhists and Jains. The word "Hindu" in its literal sense ought to include all these ; but as signifying the Religion it would not be proper to call all these Hindus. It is very hard, therefore, to find any common name for our Religion seeing that this Religion is a collection, so to speak, of various religions, of various

Meaning of  
the word  
"Hindu".

Why  
Vedantist is  
a better  
name.

ideas, of various ceremonials and forms, all gathered together almost without a name, and without a church, and without an organisation. The only point where, perhaps, all our sects agree, is here, that we all believe in the Scriptures—the Vedas. This perhaps is certain that no man can have a right to be called a Hindu who does not admit the supreme authority of the Vedas or the Sruti. All these Vedas, as all of you are aware, are divided into two portions—the *Karma Kanda* and the *Jnana Kanda*. The *Karma Kanda* includes various sacrifices and ceremonials, of which the larger part has fallen into disuse in the present time. The *Jnana Kanda* as embodying the spiritual teachings of the Srutis known as the Upanishads and the Vedanta, has always been cited as the highest authority by all our teachers, our philosophers, and our writers, whether Dualist, or Qualified Monist, or Monist. Whatever be his philosophy or sect, every one in India has to find his authority in the Upanishads. If he cannot, his sect would be heterodox. Therefore perhaps the one name in modern times which would designate every Hindu throughout the land would be "Vedantist" or "Vaidik" as you may put it; and in that sense I always use the words "Vedantism" and "Vedanta". I want to make it a little clearer, for of late it has become the custom of most people to identify the word Vedanta with the Advaitic system of the Vedanta Philosophy. We all know that Advaitism is only one branch of the various philoso-

Why  
Vedanta  
is identified

phic systems that have been founded on the Upanishads. The followers of the Visishtadvaitic system have as much reverence for the Upanishads as the followers of the Advaita, and the Visishtadvaitists claim as much authority for the Upanishads as the Advaitist. So do the Dualists ; so do all the other sects in India. But the word Vedantist has become somewhat identified in the popular mind with the word Advaitist, perhaps for the following reason. We have the Srutis first for our Scriptures, then we have Smritis and Puranas,—subsequent writings—to illustrate the doctrines of the Vedas ; these of course have not the same weight as the Vedas. For the law regarding the authority of the Scriptures is that wherever these Puranas and Smritis differ from any part of the Srutis, the Srutis must be followed and the Smriti rejected. Now in the expositions of the Advaita system by the great philosopher Sankara and the school founded by him, we find most of the authorities cited are from the Upanishads or Srutis, and very rarely from the Smritis, except when elucidating points which could hardly be found in the Srutis. On the other hand other schools take more refuge in the Smritis and less in the Srutis. And as we go to more and more Dualistic sects we find greater and greater proportionate quantities of the Smritis quoted which is out of all proportion to what we should expect from Vedantists. It is perhaps because these dualistic sects gave such predominance to the authorities of

the Puranas and the Smritis that the Advaitist came to be considered as the Vedantist *par excellence*.

Vedanta  
covers the  
whole religi-  
ous thought  
of India.

However it might have been, as we have seen, the word Vedanta must cover the whole ground of Indian Religious life. And the Vedanta and the Upanishads being part of the Vedas, by all acceptance, are the most ancient literature that we have ; for whatever might be the idea of western scholars, the Hindus are not ready to admit that parts of the Vedas were written at one time and parts were written at another time. They of course still hold on to their belief that the whole of the Vedas were produced at the same time, rather if I may so call it—they were never produced, they always existed in the mind of the Lord. This is what I mean by the word Vedanta, and its religion is that which covers the ground of Dualism, of Qualified Monism and Advaitism alike, in India. We may take in parts even of Buddhism, and of Jainism too, within its fold, if they would come in,—for the Vedanta is sufficiently liberal to allow that. It is they that will not come in while we are ready to accept them ; for upon severe analysis you will always find that the essence of Buddhism is all borrowed from the Upanishads ; even the ethics, the so-called great and wonderful ethics of Buddhism, is word for word there, in some one or other of the Upanishads, and so also are all the good doctrines of the Jains there, minus their vagaries. In the Upanishads, again, we find the germs of all the subsequent development of

Indian religious thought. Sometimes it has been urged without any ground whatsoever that there is no ideal of *Bhakti* in the Upanishads. Those that have been students of Upanishads know that it is not true at all. There is enough of *Bhakti* in every Upanishad, if you will only seek for that ; but other ideas of *Bhakti* which are found so fully developed in later times in the Puranas and the Smritis are also to be found in their germinal state in the Upanishads. The sketch, the skeleton, was there, as it were, only it was filled in by the Puranas later on. And there is not a single full-grown Indian ideal that cannot be traced back to the same source—the Upanishads. Certain ludicrous attempts have been made by persons without much Upanishadic scholarship to trace *Bhakti* to some foreign source ; but as you all know these have all been failures and all the ideas of *Bhakti* are to be found not only in the Upanishads, but is there, even in the Samhitas. The ideals of worship and love and all the rest are there ; only these have matured later in the Puranas. In the Samhita portions of the Vedas, you find now and then, traces, of a religion of fear and tribulation ; you find a worshipper quaking before a Varuna, or some other god, or perhaps you find him tortured by the idea of sin, but in the Upanishads you find no delineation of such things. There is no religion of fear in the Upanishads ; it is one of Love and Knowledge.

The ideal of *Bhakti* is a growth of the Upanishadic idea and not foreign.

The Upanishads have been differently explained.



The Upanishads and difficulties in the right understanding of them.

and as I have told you already, wherever there is a difference between them and the subsequent Puranās, the Puranas must give way to the former. But it is at the same time true that in practice we find ourselves to be ninety per cent. Puranics and ten per cent. Vaidiks, even if so much as that, at present. And as the result of that we find the most contradictory usages and religious opinions which scarcely have any authority in the Scriptures, in our society. Again, in many places we find local customs of the country that neither have their authority in the Upanishads, nor in the Smritis, nor in the Puranas, prevailing among the people and each ignorant villager thinking that if those die out, he will no more remain a Hindu. In his mind Vedantism and these little local customs have been indissolubly identified. So it is hard for him to understand that what he is doing has not the sanction of the Scriptures, and that the giving up of many of his local customs will make him a better man and not hurt him at all as a Hindu.

Again in going to read the Scriptures we come across this difficulty. These Scriptures of ours had once been very vast. We read in the Mahabhashya of Patanjali, that great philological work, that the Sama Veda had one thousand branches. Where are they all? Nobody knows. So with each of the other Vedas; the major portion of them has disappeared, and it is only a minor portion that remains to us of them. They were formerly taken

charge of by particular families ; and either these families died out, or were killed under foreign persecution, or became extinct somehow ; and with them, that particular branch of the Vedas, which they took charge of became extinct also. This fact we ought to remember as it always forms the sheet-anchor in the hands of those who want to preach anything new, or to defend any local custom, which is not to be found in the existing minor portion of the Vedas. For we know the fact that in all discussions upon a local custom and its sanction in the Srutis, whenever it is pointed out that the local custom is against the Scriptures, the argument forwarded by its supporters is that the custom existed in a branch of the Srutis which has now become extinct. This has become almost a canon all over India. In the midst of many varying methods of reading and commenting on our Scriptures it is very difficult indeed to find the thread that runs through all of them. Yet we have the sure conviction within that there must be some common ground underlying all these varying divisions and subdivisions, there must be a common plan, into which all these little divisions fit and form a harmonious whole, some common basis to this apparently hopeless mass of confusion in which we find our religion at present. It must be there, else our religion could not have stood so long. Our commentators, again, do not help us to find that common ground and here we find another difficulty. The Advaitic commentator,

whenever an Advaitic text comes, preserves it just as it is ; but as soon as a Dualistic text presents itself before him he tortures it, if he can, and brings the most queer meaning out of it. In this way, sometimes, the word "Unborn" has come to signify a "goat",—"Aja" the "Unborn" is explained as "Aja" a she-goat, to suit the commentator. In the same way, if not in a still worse fashion, the texts are handled by the Dualistic commentators. Every Dualistic text is preserved, and every text that speak of non-dualistic philosophy, is tortured in any fashion they like. The Sanskrit of the Vedas is so ancient and intricate and its philology so perfect, that any amount of discussion can be carried on for years in regard to the meaning of any word in it. If a Pandit takes it into his head, he can explain any foolish prattle in the language as correct Sanskrit, embodying noble sentiment, by force of argument and quotations of texts and rules. Such are the difficulties in the way of understanding the Upanishads.

It was given to me, however, to live with a man who was as ardent a Dualist, as he was an Advaitist, as ardent a *Bhakta*, as he was a *Jnani*. And living with this man first put it into my head to understand the Upanishads and the texts of the Scriptures from an independent and better basis than blindly to follow the commentators. And from my humble researches, I came to the conclusion, that these varying texts are not at all contradictory. So we

need not have any fear of text-torturing at all! <sup>of these difficulties.</sup> They are beautiful, ~~ave~~, they are most wonderful, and they are not contradictory, but wonderfully harmonious, one idea leading to the other. But the one fact I found is that each one of the Upanishads begins with Dualistic ideas, with worship and all that, and ends with a grand flourish of Advaitic ideas.

Now, therefore, I find, in the light of this man's life, that the Dualist and the Advaitist need not fight each other ; each has a place, and a great place in the national life ; the Dualist must remain ; he is as much part and parcel of the national religious life as the Advaitist ; one cannot exist without the other ; one is the fulfilment of the other ; one is the building, the other is the top ; the one the root, the other the fruit. Then again any attempt to torture the texts of the Upanishads appears to me very ridiculous, for the language of the Upanishads, I come to find out, is so wonderful. Apart from all its merits as the greatest philosophy, apart from its merit as theology, and as showing the path of salvation to mankind, the Upanishadic literature is the most wonderful painting of sublimity that the world has. Here comes out in full force that introspective and intuitive Hindu mind, which is an individuality of the human mind taken in its totality. We have paintings of sublimity elsewhere in all nations, but you will find almost without exception that their ideal is to grasp the sublime in the external. Take for instance, Milton, Dante, Homer or any of those

Western Poets. There are passages in them, which express the sublime wonderfully ; but there it is always grasping it through the senses and the muscles, these getting infinite expansion, as it were, in the infinity of space. We find the same attempts in the Samhita portion of the Vedas. You know some of those most wonderful *Riks*, where creation is described, the very heights of expression of the sublime in the external, the infinite in space, that is reached in them. But there they found out very soon that the Infinite could not be reached in that way, that even the infinite space and expansion and the infinite external nature could not express the ideas that were struggling to find expression in their minds ; and they fell back upon other explanations. Henceforth the language became new, as it were, in the Upanishads ; it became almost negative. The language appears to be sometimes chaotic, it takes you beyond the senses, sometimes going half way towards the goal, as it were, and leaving you there, only pointing out to you something which you cannot grasp, which you cannot sense, but which at the same time you feel certain is there. What passages in all literature can compare with this for instance ? "There the sun cannot illumine, nor the moon, nor the stars, the flash of lightning cannot illumine the place, what to speak of fire."\* Where can you find a

The painting  
of sublimity  
in the  
Upanishads.

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“यत्कीं पूर्वं भाति न चन्द्रतारकम्, तेना विद्युदो भाति  
कुलीयकम्.”—चण्डीपनिषद् ।

more perfect expression of all the philosophies of the world—the gist of what the Hindus ever dreamt and thought of human salvation, painted in language more wonderful, in figure more marvellous? Upon the same tree there are two birds of beautiful plumage, most friendly to each other, one busy tasting the fruits of the tree and the other, sitting there calm and silent; the one on the lower branch is becoming happy and unhappy as he tastes the sweet and bitter fruits, while the other sits calm and majestic on the top, immersed in his own glory and cares neither for the happiness nor the misery which the taste of the sweet and bitter fruits bring.\* This is the picture of the human soul. Man is eating the sweets and bitters of this life. Pursuing gold, pursuing his senses, pursuing the vanities of life hopelessly, madly carcering he goes. In other places the Upanishads have compared it to a charioteer driving mad and unrestrained horses. Such is the career of men pursuing the vanities of life, of men who are as children dreaming golden dreams to find that they are but vain, of men, now grown old, but still chewing the cud of their past deeds, and yet not knowing how to get out of this net-work. Thus, we are; yet in the life of every one there come golden moments, in the midst of deepest sorrow, nay, of

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\* वा सुपर्वा सुयुजा सखाया समानान् वृक्षम् परिवसन्ति

सवीरवः पिप्पलम् खादयन्तेत्युपनिषत्सु ॥

इत्यदि,—सुखकीर्तिरुद ।

deepest joy even, there come moments when, as it were, a part of the cloud that hides the sun-light moves away, and we catch a glimpse in spite of ourselves, of something beyond, away, away beyond the life of the senses, away, away beyond its vanities, its joys and its sorrows, away, away beyond all our imaginations of worlds of happiness here or hereafter—away beyond all thirst for gold, or fame, name, or posterity. Man stops for a moment on receiving this glimpse and sees the other bird calm and majestic, eating neither sweet nor bitter fruits, immersed in his own glory, self-content and self-satisfied, as the Gita says, Those that have become satisfied in the *Atman*, those who do not want anything beyond *Atman*, what work is there for them? Why should they drudge?\*

Man catches the glimpse, then forgets it, and again goes on eating the sweet and bitter fruits of life. Then after a time, he who is the lower bird, catches another such glimpse, perhaps because he has moved nearer to the upper bird on receiving blows from the world. He is fortunate indeed, if he receives harder and hardest knocks, for these make him come nearer and nearer to the other bird, who is his friend and his companion in life. So on he moves and as he gets closer he finds that the light from the other bird is playing round his own

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\* य इत्यात्मरतिरेव स्वाहात्मनश्च जीवतः ।

“सोमेनेव च सन्तुष्टस्तस्य कार्यं न विद्यते ॥ जीता ।

plumage, nearer still and lo! the transformation is begun!—he finds himself gradually melting away, until his consciousness of a separate existence has entirely disappeared. He finds that he did not really exist; but was the reflection of the upper bird all along, the bird who is ever calm, majestic and glorious. Then there is no more fear for him; perfectly satisfied, and calmly serene, he remains. In this figure the Upanishads take you from the Dualistic to the utmost Advaitic conception. Examples can be added to examples of such nature, but we have no time in this lecture to do that, to show the marvellous poetry of the Upanishads, the grand conceptions and the painting of the sublime that it contains. The language, the thought and everything else in such, fall upon you like a sword blade, like a hammer blow and appeal directly to your heart. And there is no mistaking their meanings. Every tone of that music is firm and produces its full effects; no gyrations, no mad words, no intricacies in which the brain is lost. Signs of degradation are not there; no attempts at too much allegorising, too much piling of adjectives upon adjectives, making it more and more intricate, till the whole of the sense is lost, and the brain becomes giddy, and you do not find your way out of the maze, none of that yet. If it be human literature, it must be the production of a race which has not yet lost a bit of its national vigour. Strength, strength is what it talks to you from every page. The idea of strength is the one

Strength, fearlessness and freedom are the great lessons taught there.



great thing to note in them ; it has been the one great lesson I have always derived from them in my life. Strength, it says, strength, oh man, be not weak. Aye, are there no human weaknesses? asks man. There are, say the Upanishads, but will more weakness heal it,—would you try to wash dirt with dirt? Will sin cure sin, weakness cure weakness? Strength, oh man, strength, say the Upanishads, stand up and be strong. Aye, it is the only literature in the world where you find the expression “Abhiih”, “fearless”, used again and again ; “Abhiih”, fearless, in no other scripture in the world is this adjective applied either to God or to man. And to my mind rises from the past, the vision of the Indian *sadhu* and the great Emperor of the West, Alexander the great, in this connection. I see, as it were in a picture, the great monarch standing on the banks of the Indus, talking to one of our Sannyasins in the forest. I see the old *sadhu* he was talking to, naked, perhaps stark naked, sitting upon a block of stone and the Emperor astonished at his wisdom tempting him with gold and honour, to come over to Greece. The *sadhu* smiles at his gold, and smiles at his temptations, and refuses ; and then the Emperor stands on his authority, he says, “I will kill you, if you do not come”. The *sadhu* bursts into a laugh and says, “You never told such a falsehood in your life before ! Who can kill me ? Me you kill, Emperor of the material World ! Never, for I am spirit unborn and undecaying, never was.

I born and never do I die, I am the Infinite, the Omnipresent, the Omniscient, and you kill me, child that you are!" Aye that is strength, that is strength. Therein is the great practical application of the one lesson which the Upanishads teach. And the more I read the Upanishads, my friends, my countrymen, the more I weep for you. Strength, strength for us. What we need is strength, who will give us strength? There are thousands to weaken us and of stories we have had enough. Every one of our Puranas if you press it gives out stories enough to fill three-fourths of the libraries of the world. We have all that. Everything that can weaken us as a race we have had for the last thousand years. It seems as if for the last thousand years national life had this one end in view, *viz.*, how to make us weaker and weaker, till we have become real earthworms, crawling at the feet of every one who dares to put his foot on us. Therefore my friends, as one of your blood, as one that lives and dies with you, let me tell you that we want strength, strength, and every time strength. And the Upanishads are the great mine of strength. Therein lies strength enough to invigorate the whole world; through it the whole world can be vivified, made strong, energised. They call with trumpet voice upon the weak, the miserable and the down-trodden of all races, all creeds, and all sects, to stand on their feet and be free. Freedom, physical freedom, mental freedom, and spiritual freedom are the watch word of the Upanishads. Aye,

this is the one Scripture in the world, of all others, that does not talk of salvation, but of freedom. Be free from the bonds of nature, be free from weakness ! And it shows to you that you have it already in you. That is another peculiarity. You are a Dvaitist, never mind, you have still to admit that by its very nature the soul is perfect ; only by certain actions of the soul has it become contracted. Indeed the theory of contraction and expansion of Ramanuja is exactly what the modern evolutionists call Evolution and Atavism. The soul goes backward and becomes contracted as it were ; then its powers become potential ; and by good deeds and good thoughts it expands again and reveals its natural perfection. With that the Advaitist has this one difference, that he admits evolution in nature and not in the soul. Suppose there is a screen with a small hole in it and looking through that hole at this grand assembly, I can only see very few of the faces here. Suppose the hole to increase ; as it increases, more and more of all this assembly is revealed unto me, till the hole has become as big as the screen itself, identified with the screen, and I see there is nothing amiss between you and me ; neither you changed nor I changed ; all the change was in the screen. You were the same from first to last ; only the screen changed. This is the Advaitist's position with regard to Evolution—evolution of nature and manifestation of the Self within. Not that the Self can by any means be made to contract. It is unchange-

able, the Infinite One. It is covered, as it were, with a veil, the veil of *Maya* and as this *Maya* veil becomes thinner and thinner, the inborn, natural glory of the soul becomes more and more manifest. This is the one great doctrine which the world is waiting to learn from India. Whatever they may talk, however they may try to boast, they will find out, as days go by, that no longer can there be a society without recognising this. Do you not see how everything is being revolutionised? It was the custom to take for granted that everything was wicked until it proved itself to be good. In education, in punishing criminals, in treating lunatics, in the treatment of common diseases even, that was the old law. But what is the modern law? The modern law says, the body itself is healthy ; it cures diseases of its own nature. Medicine can at best help the storing up of the best in the body. What says it of criminals? It takes for granted that however low a criminal may be there is still the divinity within, which does not change, and we must treat criminals as such. They have changed the old ways now. They call gaols penitentiaries. So with everything ; consciously or unconsciously that divinity which is within, is expressing itself everywhere, both inside and outside India. In your books is the explanation of these changes and they have got to take it. The treatment of one man to another will be entirely revolutionised and these old old ideas, pointing to the weakness of mankind, will have to go. They will

receive their death-blow within this century. People may stand up and criticise me now. I have been criticised from one end of the world to the other as one who preaches the diabolical idea that there is no sin. But, never mind. The descendants of these very men will bless me as the preacher of virtue, and not of sin. I am the preacher of virtue, not of sin. I glory in being the preacher of light and not of darkness.

The second great idea which the world is waiting to receive from our Upanishads is the solidarity of this universe. The old old lines of demarcation and differentiation are vanishing rapidly. Electricity and steam-power are placing the different parts of the world in intercommunication with one another, and, as a result, we Hindus no more say that every country beyond our own land is peopled with demons and hobgoblins nor do the people of Christian countries say that India is only peopled by cannibals and savages. We go out of our country, we find the same brother man with the same strong hand to help, with the same lips to say god-speed, and that sometimes better than in the country in which we are born. They, when they come here, find the same brotherhood, the same cheers, the same god-speed. Well, our Upanishads say that the cause of all misery is ignorance; and that is perfectly true applied to every state of life either social or spiritual. It is ignorance that makes us hate each other, it is ignorance of each other that we do not know and

Solidarity of  
the universe  
as taught in  
the Upani-  
shads.

do not love each other. As soon as we come to know each other, love comes, must come, for are we not one? Thus we find solidarity coming in, in spite of itself. Even in Politics and Sociology, problems that were only national twenty years ago can no more be solved on national grounds. They are assuming huge proportions, gigantic shapes. They can only be solved when looked at in the broader light of international grounds. International organisations, international combinations, international laws are the cry of the day. That shows the solidarity. In science, everyday, they are finding out that view regarding the material universe. In speaking of matter, the whole universe is as but one mass, one ocean of matter, in which you and I, the sun and the moon, and everything else, are but names, different little whirlpools and nothing more; from the standpoint of mind, it is but one universal ocean of thought, in which your mind and my mind form similar little whirlpools; and from the standpoint of the spirit it is one Unchangeable, Unbroken, Homogeneous *Atman*, which moveth not, changeth not. The cry for the rationale of ethics has been raised at present, and that too is to be found in our books. The explanation of morality, the fountain-head of ethics, is what the world wants to-day; and that it will get from our books only. And do we not want these things in India now? If foreigners want these we want them twenty times more. Because, in spite of the greatness of our

**Weakness is  
the cause of  
most of our  
miseries.**

Upanishads, in spite of our boasted ancestry from sages, I must tell you in plain words, we are weak, very weak compared with many other races. First of all there is our physical weakness. That physical weakness is the cause at least of one-third of our miseries. We are lazy ; we cannot work ; we cannot combine ; we do not love each other ; we are immensely selfish ; not three of us can come together without hating one another, without being jealous of one another. That is the state in which we are hopelessly disorganized mobs, immensely selfish, fighting each other for centuries whether a certain mark is to be put this way or that way ; writing volumes and volumes upon such most momentous questions as whether the look of a particular man spoils my food or not ! This we have been doing for the last few centuries. We cannot expect anything else but degradation of a race whose whole brain energy has been occupied in such wonderfully beautiful problems and researches ! And we are not ashamed. Or if we are sometimes, we cannot do anything better. We speak of many things, parrot-like, but never do them, until speaking and never doing has become a habit with us. What is the cause of that ? Physical weakness. This weak brain is not able to do anything ; we must change this. Our young men must be strong, first of all. Religion will come afterwards. Be strong my young friends, that is my advice to you. You will be nearer to Heaven through football than through the study of the Gita. Bold words

are these. I have to say them. I love you. I know where the shoe pinches. I have gained a little experience. You will understand the Gita better with your biceps, your muscles a little stronger. You will understand the mighty genius and the mighty strength of Krishna better with a little of strong blood in you. You will understand the Upanishads and the glory of the *Atman* better, when your body stands firm upon your feet and you feel yourselves as men. Thus we have to apply these to our needs. People get disgusted many times at my preaching Advaitism. I do not mean to preach to you Advaitism, or Dvaitism, or any *ism* in the world. The only *ism* that we require now is the wonderful idea of the soul—its eternal might, its eternal strength, its eternal purity, and its eternal perfection.

If I had a child I would from its very birth begin to tell it "Thou art the Pure One." You have read in one of the Puranas that beautiful story of Queen Madalasa, how as she used to swing the hammock of her babe she always sang to the tune, "Thou art the Pure One, the Stainless, Sinless, the Mighty One, the Great One." Ayè, there is much in that. **Feel that you are great.** Feel that you are great and you become great. That is what I found in my experience all over the world. They may talk about sin and sinners, but if all Englishmen actually believed that they were sinners, Englishmen would be no better now than the Negroes in the middle of Africa. God bless them that they do not believe it. The Englishman believes



Have faith  
in your-  
selves.

on the other hand, that he is born the lord of the world. He believes he is great and can do anything in the world, if he wants he can go to the sun or the moon, and that makes him great. If he had believed his priests that he is a poor little sinner, going to be barbecued through all eternity, he would not be the same Englishman that he is to-day. So I find that in all prosperous nations, the divine within man, asserts itself in spite of priests and superstitions. But we have lost faith. Would you believe me, we have a thousand times less faith in ourselves than what the Englishmen and their women have in themselves. These are plain words, but I say it for I cannot help it. Don't you see how Englishmen and women, when they catch our ideals, become mad as it were, and although they are the ruling class, come to India to preach our own religion against the jeers and ridicule of their countrymen? How many of you can go out to preach your own religion even? Just think of that. And why can you not do that? Not that you do not know it but you know more than they, that is why it is ; you are more wise than is good for you, that is your difficulty ! Because your blood is only a pint of tar, your brain is sloughing, and your body is weak. Your physical weakness is the cause of all that and nothing else ; therefore change the body, it must be changed. You have talked of reforms, of ideals, and all these, for the last hundred years, but when it comes to practice, you are not to be found anywhere till you

have disgusted the whole world, and the very name of your reform has become a thing of ridicule to the whole world! And what is the cause? Is it that you do not know? Nay, you know too much. The only cause is that you are weak, weak, weak, your body is weak, your mind is weak, and you have no faith in yourselves! Thousand years of crushing tyranny of castes, and kings, and foreigners, and of your own people, have taken out all strength from you, my brethren! you are like broken and trodden down worms that have no backbone! Who will give us strength? Let me tell you, strength is what we want. And the first step in getting strength is to uphold the Upanishads and to believe that, "I am the soul, me the sword cannot cut, nor instruments pierce; me the fire cannot burn, the air cannot dry; I am the Omnipotent, I am the Omniscient." Believe in their blessed saving words. So repeat these and do not say we are weak; we can do anything and everything. What can we not do? Everything can be done by us for we have the same glorious soul in every one of us; let us believe in it. Have faith, as Nachiketa. At the time of his father's sacrifice, faith came unto Nachiketa; aye, I wish that faith would come unto each one of you and every one of you would stand up a gigantic intellect, a world-mover, a spiritual giant, God-like in every respect; that is what I want you to become. It is strength that you get from the Upanishads, it is faith that you will get, from there.

The truths  
of the Upanishads are  
for every  
one, in  
every occupation  
of life.

These were all there but they were reserved as "Rahasya," (mystery), intended only for the Sannyasin. Thus the Upanishads passed exclusively into the hands of the Sannyasin, who renounced and went into the forest! Sankara is a little kind when he says that even *Grihasthas* may study the Upanishads, it will do them good; it will not hurt them. But still the idea with him is that the Upanishads belong mainly to the forest. But the only authoritative commentary of the Upanishads has been made once and for ever by Him who revived the Vedas, by Krishna in the Gita. There it is that the truths of the Upanishads are open to every one in every occupation of life. These conceptions of the Vedanta must not only remain in the forest and the cave, but they must come out to work in the bar and the bench, in the pulpit, and the cottage of the poor man; they must come even to the fishermen that are catching fish, and the students that are studying. They must come to every man, every woman, and child, whatever be their occupation; everywhere they must be; and what fear? The ideals of the Upanishads! how can the fishermen and all these carry them out? The way has been shown. The ways for practical carrying out of the ideals are infinite, for religion is infinite and none can go beyond its pale; for it includes whatever you may do, and even the least done of it brings marvellous results. Therefore let every one do what little he can. If the fisherman thinks

that he is the spirit, he will be a better fisherman ; if the student thinks he is the spirit, he will be a better student. If the lawyer thinks that he is the spirit, he will be a better lawyer, and so on, and the result will be that the castes will remain for ever. It is in the nature of society to form itself into groups ; only the exclusive privileges will have to go. Caste is a natural order. I can perform one duty in social life, you another ; you can govern a country, and I can mend a pair of old shoes, but that is no reason why you are greater than me. For can you mend my shoes or I govern the country ? The division of work is natural. I am clever in mending shoes, you clever in reading the Vedas, but that is no reason why you should trample on my head ; that is no reason why you will be praised if you commit murder, and I hanged if I steal an apple. This will go. Caste is good. That is the only natural way of solving differences of life. Men must form themselves into groups, you cannot get rid of that. Wherever you go there will be caste. But that does not mean that there will be these privileges. They will be knocked on the head. If you teach Vedanta to the fisherman, he will say, I am as good a man as you, I am a fisherman, you are a philosopher, never mind, I have the same God in me as you have in you. And that is what we want, no privilege for any one, equal chances for every one. Let every one be taught of the Divine within, and every one will work out his own salvation. Liberty is the first

Caste without privileges will always remain

The Divine in all.

condition of growth. It is wrong, a thousand times wrong, if any of you dares to say 'I will work out the salvation of this woman or child.' I am asked again and again as to what I think of the widow-problem and what I think of the woman question. Let me answer once for all, am I a widow that you ask me that nonsense! Am I a woman, that you ask me that question again and again? Who are you to solve women's problems? Are you the Lord God himself, ruling over every woman and every widow? Hands off. They will solve their own problems. Nonsense! Tyrants attempting to think that they can do anything for any one! Hands off. The Lord God will look after all. Who are you to assume that you know everything; how dare you think, oh blasphemers, that you have the right over God. For don't you know that every soul is the soul of God, oh, blasphemers! Mind your own *Karma*, a load of *Karma* is there in you for working out. Oh ye blasphemers! Your nation may put you upon a pedestal, your society may cheer you up to the skies; fools may praise you; but He sleeps not, He will catch you, and the punishment will be sure, here or hereafter. Therefore look upon every man and woman and every one as God. You cannot help anyone; you can only serve; serve the children of the Lord, serve the Lord Himself, if you are fortunate to have the privilege. If the Lord grants that you can help any one of His children blessed you are; do not think too much of yourselves. Blessed you

Worship and  
serve Him  
in all and  
give up the  
idea of help-  
ing them.

are that that privilege was given to you and others had it not. Hands off, therefore ; none here requires your help. Therefore, your help must consist in worship. I see there are some poor, and because it is of my salvation I will go and worship them for God is there. Some here are miserable for your and my salvation, so that we may serve the Lord, coming in the shape of the diseased, the lunatic, the leper, and the sinner. Bold are my words, but let me tell them for it is the greatest privilege in your or my life that we are allowed to serve the Lord in all these shapes. Give up the idea that by ruling some one you can do any good to him. You can do only as in the case of the plant ; you can supply the growing seed with the materials for the making up of its body, bringing to it the earth, the water, the air, that it wants. It will take all that it wants by its own nature, assimilate and grow by its own nature. Bring all light into the world ; light, bring light ; let light come unto every one, let the task be not finished till everyone has reached the Lord. Bring light to the poor, and bring more light to the rich, for they require it more than the poor ; bring light to the ignorant, and more light to the educated, for the vanities of this education of your time are tremendous ! Thus bring light to all and leave the rest unto the Lord, for in the words of the same Lord, "To work you have the right and not to the fruits thereof." Let not your work produce results for *you*, and at the same time may you never be without

work. May He who taught such grand ideas to us, to our forefathers ages before, help us to get strength to carry into practice His commands.

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## THE SAGES OF INDIA.

(ADDRESS DELIVERED AT MADRAS).

In speaking of the sages of India, my mind goes back to those periods of which history has no record, and tradition tries in vain to bring the secrets out of the gloom of the past. The sages of India have been almost innumerable, for what has the Hindu nation been doing for thousands of years except producing sages? I will take, therefore, the lives of a few of the most brilliant ones, the epoch-makers, and present my study of them before you. In the first place, we have to understand a little about our scriptures. Two different classes of truth are there in our scriptures, the one is what we call the eternal, and the other not so authoritative, yet binding under particular circumstances, and times, and places. The eternal truths which deal with the nature of the soul, of God, and of the relation between soul and God, are embodied in what we call the the "Srutis, the Vedas. The next set of truth is what we call the Smritis, as embodied in the works of Manu, Jájnavalkya, and other writers, and also in the Puranas, down to the Tantras. This second class of books and teachings is subordinate to the Srutis, inasmuch as whenever anyone of these contradicts anything in the Srutis, the Srutis must prevail. This is the law. The idea is that the outline of the destiny

Two different acts of truth in Srutis and Smritis.



and goal of man has been delineated in the Vedas, the details having been left to be worked out in the Smritis and Puranas. As for general directions, the Srutis are enough ; for spiritual life, nothing more can be said, nothing more can be discovered. All that is necessary has been known, all the advice that is necessary to lead the soul to perfection has been completed in the Srutis ; the details alone were omitted and these the Smritis have supplied from time to time. Another peculiarity is that these Srutis have many sages as the recorders of the truths in them, mostly men, and women even. Very little is known of their personalities, the dates of their birth, and so forth, but their best thoughts—their best discoveries, I should say—are preserved there, embodied in the sacred literature of our country, the Vedas. In the Smritis, on the other hand, personalities are more in evidence. Startling, gigantic, impressive, world-moving persons for the first time, as it were, stand before us, sometimes of more magnitude even than their teachings.

Hinduism combines both the principles of the worship of the impersonal and the personal God.

The one peculiarity which we shall have to remember about our religion is that it preaches an Impersonal Personal God. It preaches impersonal laws *plus* personality. But the very fountain-head of our religion is in the Srutis, the Vedas, which are perfectly impersonal, and the persons all appear in the Smritis and Puranas—the great Avatars, incarnations of God, Prophets, and so forth. And this ought also to be observed, that except our religion, every

other religion in the world depends upon the life or lives of some personal founder or founders. Christianity is built upon the life of Jesus Christ, Moham-medanism of Mohammed, Buddhism of Buddha, Jainism of the Jinas, and so on. It naturally follows that there must be in all these religions a good deal of fight about what they call the historical evidences of these great personalities. If at any time the historical evidences about the existence of these personages in ancient times become weak, the whole building of the religion tumbles down to the ground and is broken to pieces. We escaped this fate because our religion is not based upon persons but on principles. That you obey your religion is not because it came through the authority of a sage, no, not even of an incarnation. Krishna is not the authority of the Vedas, but the Vedas are the authority of Krishna himself. His glory is that he is the greatest preacher of the Vedas that ever existed. So also are the other incarnations; so with all our sages. Our first principle is that all that is necessary for the perfection of man and for attaining unto freedom is there in the Vedas. You cannot find anything new. You cannot go beyond a perfect unity, which is the goal of all knowledge; this has been already reached there, and it is impossible to go beyond that unity. Religious knowledge became complete when *Tat twam asi*, ("Thou art that") was discovered, and that was in the Vedas. What remained was only the guidance of people from time

to time. According to different times and places according to different circumstances and environments, people had to be guided along the old old path, and for this these great teachers came, these great sages. Nothing can bear out more clearly this position than the celebrated saying of Sri Krishna in the Gita :—"Whenever virtue subsides and irreligion prevails I create myself for the protection of the good ; for the destruction of all immorality I come from time to time."\* This is the idea in India.

The impersonality of Vedanta gives it a universal character.

What follows? On the one hand, there are these eternal principles which stand upon their own foundations, without depending on any reasoning even, much less on the authority of sages however great, or of incarnations however brilliant they may have been. We may remark that as this is the unique position in India, our claim is that the Vedanta only can be the universal religion, that it is already the existing universal religion in the world because it teaches principles and not persons. No religion built upon a person can be taken up as a type by all the races of mankind. We find that, in fact, even in one small city, not one but many persons are taken up as types by the different minds of the people inhabiting that city. Therefore, how is it possible that one person, as Mahommed, or Buddha, or Christ, can be taken up as the one type

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\* "वदा वदा हि धर्मस्य न्यायिर्भवति भारत  
अभ्युत्थानधर्मस्य हि तदात्मानं सव्याख्यम् ।"—गीता ।

by the whole world? Nay, how is it possible that the whole of morality and ethics and spirituality and religion can be true only from the sanction of that one person, and one person alone? The Vedantic religion does not require any such personal authority ; its sanction is the eternal nature of man, its ethics, based upon the eternal spiritual solidarity of man, already existing, already attained, and not to be attained. On the other hand, from the very earliest times, our sages have been feeling conscious of this fact, that the vast majority of mankind require a person. They must have a Personal God in some form or other. The very Buddha who declared against the existence of a Personal God had not died fifty years before his disciples manufactured a Personal God out of him. It proves that the ideal of a Personal God is necessary for worship. At the same time we know that, instead of and better than vain imaginations of a Personal God which in ninety-nine cases out of a hundred are unworthy of human worship, we have in this world, living and walking in our midst, God-like men now and then. These are more worthy of worship than any imaginary God, any creation of our untutored imaginations, or any idea of God which we can devise by our reason. Sri Krishna is much greater than any idea of God you or I can make. Buddha is a much higher idea, a more living and idealised idea than any idea you or I can conceive in our minds, and therefore it is that

Its religion  
and ethics  
are for all,  
being  
based upon  
eternal  
facts.

The doctrine  
of incarna-  
tions of God

they always command the worship of mankind, even to the exclusion of all imaginary deities. This our sages knew and therefore left it open to all Indian people to worship such great personages, such incarnations. Nay, the greatest of these incarnations goes further :—"In whomsoever there is an extraordinary spiritual power manifested know that I am there ; it is from me that that manifestation comes."\* That leaves the door open for the Hindu to worship the incarnations of all the countries in the world. The Hindu can worship any sage and any saint from any country whatsoever, and as a fact we know that he goes and worships many times in the churches of the Christians and many times in the Mahomedan mosques, and that is good. Why not? Ours, as I have said, is the universal religion. It is inclusive enough, it is broad enough to include all the ideals. All the ideals of religion that already exist in the world at present can be included now and we can patiently wait for all the ideals that are to come in the future to be taken in, in the same fashion, embraced in the infinite arms of the religion of the Vedanta.

This more or less, is our position with regard to the great sages, the incarnations of God. There are also secondary characters. We find the word *Rishi* again and again mentioned in the Vedas, and it has

\* " अद्वयद्विभूतिमयं सत्त्वं श्रीमद्भक्तिमतेव वा

तत्पदं कथयन्त्येवं तं ब्रह्म ते योगिनाः सत्त्वं ॥"—गीता ।

become a common word at the present time. The *Rishi* is the great authority. We have to understand that idea. The definition is that the *Rishi* is the *Mantra-drashta*, the seer of thought. What is the proof of religion?—this was asked in very ancient times. There is no proof in the senses, was the declaration. “From whence words, with thought, reflect back without reaching the goal.”\* “There the eyes cannot reach, neither can the mind, nor any of the organs.”† That has been the declaration for ages and ages. Nature outside cannot give us any answer as to the existence of the soul, the existence of God, the eternal life, the goal of man, and all that. This mind is continually changing, always in a state of flux, it is finite, it is broken into pieces. What can this nature talk of the Infinite, the Unchangeable, the Unbroken, the Indivisible, the Eternal? It never can. And wherever mankind has striven in vain to get an answer from dull dead matter, history knows how disastrous the results have been. How comes, therefore, the knowledge which the Vedas declared? It comes through a *Rishi*. This knowledge is not in the senses,—but are the senses the be-all and the end-all of man? Who dares say that the senses are the all-in-all of man? Even in our lives, in the life of every one of us here, there come moments of calmness. Perhaps, when we see before us the

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\* “वसा वाचा विवर्तकोऽवसाव मनसा लब्ध” —वेदविरीच ।

† “न मनश्चक्षुर्न श्रोत्रं न वाक् न स्पर्शः” —वेद .

death of one we loved, when some shock comes to us, or when extreme blessedness comes to us, many other occasions there are when the mind, as it were, becomes calm, and getting detached from the outside world enters within itself. It is then that a glimpse of the Infinite beyond where words cannot reach nor the mind go, is revealed to us. This happens in ordinary life and has to be heightened, practised, perfected. It is then that men found out, ages ago, that the soul within is not bound or limited by the senses, no not even by consciousness. We have to understand that this consciousness is only the name of a link in an infinite chain. Being is not identical with consciousness, but consciousness is only one part of Being and it requires boldness to search for it beyond consciousness. Consciousness is bound by the senses. Beyond that, beyond the senses, men must go in order to arrive at truths of the spiritual world, and there are even now persons who succeed in going beyond the bounds of the senses. These are called *Rishis*, because they come face to face with spiritual truths. The proof, therefore, of the Vedas is just the same as the proof of this table before me, *pratyaksham*, direct perception. This I see with the senses, and the truths of spirituality we also see in a super-conscious state of the human mind. This Rishi-state is not limited by time, or by place, or by sex, or by race. Vátsyáyana boldly declares that this Rishihood is the common property of the descendants of the sage, of the Aryan, of the non-Aryan, of

even the Mlechcha. This is the sageship of the Vedas, and we ought constantly to remember that to attain that is the ideal of religion in India, which I wish other nations of the world would also remember and learn, so that there might be less fight and less quarrel. Religion is not in books, nor in theories, nor in dogmas, nor in talking, not even in reasoning. It is being and becoming. Aye, my friends, until each one of you has become a *Rishi* and come face to face with spiritual facts, religious life has not begun for you. Until the super-conscious opens for you, religion is mere talk, it all is but preparation.\* You are talking second hand, third hand, and here applies that beautiful saying of Buddha when he had a discussion with some Brahmins. They came discussing about the nature of *Brahman* and the great sage asked one, "Have you seen *Brahman*?" "No," said the Brahmin; "Or your father?", "No, neither he." "Or your grandfather?" "I don't think even he saw Him," "My friend, whom your father and grandfather never saw, how do you discuss about such a person, and try to put down each other?" That is what the whole world is doing. Let us say in the language of the Vedanta, "This Atman is not to be reached by too much talk, no, not even by the highest intellect, nor by the study of the Vedas themselves."\* Let us speak to all the nations of the world in the

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\* 'नायनाया प्रवचनेन खर्ची ।

न निवक्तुं न बुद्ध्या नूतेन । खडोपनिषत् ।



language of the Vedas—Vain are your fights and your quarrels ; have you seen God whom you want to preach ? If you have not seen, vain is your preaching, you do not know what you say and if you have seen God, you will not quarrel, your face will shine. An ancient sage of the Upanishads sent his son out to learn about *Brahman* and the child came back, and the father asked “what have you learnt ?” The child replied he had learnt many sciences and the father said “that is nothing, go back.” And the son went back, and when he returned again the father asked the same question, and the same answer implying his knowledge of more sciences came from him. Once more he had to go back and the next time he came his whole face was shining, and his father stood up and declared, “Aye, to-day, my child, your face shines like a knower of God.” When you have known God your very face will be changed, your voice will be changed, your whole appearance will be changed, you will be a blessing to mankind ; none will be able to resist you. This is Rishihood, the ideal of our religion. The rest, all these talks and reasonings of the philosophies about dualism, and monism, the reading and repetition of the Vedas even, are but preparations, secondary. The other is primary. The Vedas, Grammar, Astronomy, &c., all these are secondary ; that is supreme knowledge which makes us realise the Unchangeable One. Those who realised are the sages whom we find in the Vedas ; and we understand how this *Rishi* is the name of a type, of

class, which every one of us, as true Hindus, is expected to become at some period of our life, the attainment of which, to the Hindu, means salvation. Not belief in doctrines, nor going to thousands of temples, nor bathing in all the rivers in the world, but becoming the *Rishi*, the *Mantra-drashita*, that is real freedom, that is salvation.

Coming down to later times, there have been many great world-moving sages, great incarnations. According to Bhágavata they are infinite in number. Of these those that are worshipped most in India are Ráma and Krishna. Ráma, the ancient ideal of the heroic ages, the embodiment of truth, of morality, the ideal son, the ideal husband, the ideal father, and above all the ideal king. this Ráma, has been presented before us by the great sage Válmiki. No language can be purer, none chaster, none more beautiful, and at the same time simpler than the language in which the great poet has depicted the life of Ráma. And what to speak of Sita? You may exhaust the literature of the world that is past, and I may assure you, will have to exhaust the literature of the world of the future, before finding another such ideal. Sita is unique. That character was depicted once only and once for all. Rámas have been, perhaps several, but Sitas never. She is the very type of the Indian woman as she should be, for, all the Indian Ideals of a perfected woman are brought around that one life of Sita ; and here in India she stands, these thousands of years, commanding the worship of every man;

The  
incarnations  
of God :  
Rama.

woman, or child, throughout the length and breadth of the land of Aryāvarta. There she will always be, glorious Sita, purer than purity itself, all patience, and all suffering. She who bore a life of intense suffering without a murmur, she the ever chaste and ever pure wife, she the ideal of the people, the ideal of the gods, the great Sita, our national God she must always remain. And every one of us knows her too well to require much delineation. All our mythology may vanish, even our Vedas may depart, and our Sanskrit language may vanish for ever, but as long as there will be five Hindus living here, speaking the most vulgar *patois*, there will the story of Sita be present, mark my words. Sita has gone into the very vitals of our race. She is in the blood of every Hindu man and woman ; we are all children of Sita. Any attempt to modernise our woman, if it tries to take our women away from that ideal of Sita, will be a failure. The women of India must grow and develop in the foot-prints of Sita, and that is the only way.

**Krishna.**

The next is He who is worshipped in various forms. The favourite ideal of men, as well as women, the ideal of children, as well as of grown-up men. I mean Him whom the writer of *Srimat Bhagavat* was not content to call an incarnation merely but says, "The other incarnations were but parts of the Lord, whereas, Krishna, was the Lord Himself." And it is not strange that such adjectives are applied to him when we marvel at the many-sidedness of his character. He was the most wonderful *Sannyāsīn* and the most

wonderful householder in one ; he had the most wonderful amount of *Rajasa* power and was at the same time living in the midst of the most wonderful renunciation. Krishna can never be understood until you have studied the *Gítá*, for he was the embodiment of his own teaching. Every one of these incarnations came as a living illustration of what they came to preach. Krishna, the preacher of the *Gítá*, was all his life the embodiment of that song celestial ; he was the great illustration of non-attachment. He gives up his throne, He, the leader of India at whose word kings come down from their thrones, does not wish to be a king. He is the simple Krishna, ever the same Krishna who played with the Gopis. Aye, that most marvellous passage of his life which is most difficult to understand, and which no one ought to attempt even to understand until he has become perfectly chaste and pure—the most wonderful expansion of love allegorised and expressed in that beautiful play at Brindávan can be understood by him alone who has become mad with drinking deep of the cup of love ! Who can understand the throes of love of the Gopis—the very ideal of love, love that wants nothing, love that even does not care for heaven, love that does not care for anything in this world or the world to come ? And here, my friends, through this love of the Gopis, has been found the only solution of the conflict of the human mind about taking up the Personal and the Impersonal God. And through them we have come to know that the Personal God

The ideal  
love of  
the Gopis.

ought to be the highest point of human perfection. For although we know that it is more philosophical to believe in an Impersonal God, immanent in the universe, of Whom everything is a manifestation, yet at the same time our souls hanker after something concrete, something which we want to grasp, some one at whose feet we can pour our soul. Therefore, if we have to take up a Personal God at all, it is better to accept the Perfect Man as such, though strict philosophy stands aghast at such an idea! The old question which you find discussed in the Brahma Sûtras and which you find Draupadi discussing with Yudhisthira in the forest that if there is a Personal God, all-merciful, all-powerful, why is this hell of an earth here, rises again. Why did He create this? He must be a partial God indeed. And there is no solution to that. The only solution that can be found is in what you read about the love of the Gopis. They hated every adjective that was applied to Krishna; they did not care to know that he was the Lord of creation, they did not care to know that he was almighty, they did not care to know that He was omnipotent. The only thing they cared to understand of Krishna was that he was Infinite Love, that was all. The Gopis understood Krishna only as the Krishna of Brindâvan. He, the leader of the hosts, the King of kings, to them was the shepherd, and shepherd for ever. "I do not want wealth, nor many people, nor do I want learning; no, not even do I want to go to heaven. Let me be born again and

again, but Lord, grant me this, that I may have love for Thee, and that for love's sake.'\* Such was their love for him and a great landmark in the history of religion is here—the ideal of love for love's sake, work for work's sake, duty for duty's sake. And that ideal was preached in the history of humanity for the first time by this the greatest of incarnations of God, Krishna, upon the soil of India. The religions of fear and of temptation were gone for ever. In the place of inducements to religion through fear of hell and temptation of enjoyment in heaven, came the grandest of ideals, love for love's sake, duty for duty's sake, work for work's sake. And what a love these Gopis had ! I have told you just now that it is very difficult to understand the love of the Gopis. There are not wanting fools, even in the midst of us, who cannot understand the marvellous significance of that most wonderful of all episodes in their life. There are, let me repeat, fools, even born of our blood, who try to shrink from that as if from something impure. To them I have only to say, first make yourselves pure, and remember that he who tells the history of the love of the Gopis is none else but Suka Deva. The historian who records this love of the Gopis is one who was born pure, the eternally pure Suka, the son of Vyása. So long as there is selfishness in the heart, so long is love of God impossible ; it is nothing

The ideal  
of love for  
love's sake  
preached  
by Krishna.

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\* "न धनं न जनं न कर्मितां दुष्टरीं वा जनहीम् कान्तिं  
नमः सन्तानि सन्तानौदरे भवतामृषिरहेतुकी तमि ॥"

but shop-keeping, I give you something, Oh Lord, and you give me something ; and says the Lord, if you do not do this I will take good care of you when you die, I will roast you all the rest of your lives, perhaps. So long as such ideas are in the brain, how can one understand the mad throes of the Gopis' love, as expressed in the Bhagavat—"Oh for one kiss of those lips ! one who has been kissed by Thee, his thirst for Thee increases for ever, all sorrows vanish, and we forget love for everything else but for Thee and Thee alone."\* Aye, forget first the love for gold, and name, and fame, and for this little world of ours. Then, only then, you will understand the love of the Gopis, too holy to be experienced without giving up everything, too sacred to be understood until the soul has become perfectly pure. People with ideas of sex, and with desire for money, and fame, bubbling up every minute in this heart, daring to criticise and understand the love of the Gopis,—which is the very cream of the Krishna incarnation ! Even the Gitá, the great philosophy of religion, has nothing in it to compare with that ecstatic madness of love ; for, in the Gitá, the disciple is taught how to walk slowly towards the goal. But here it is the very madness of enjoyment, the drunkenness of love, which comes after reaching the goal,

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\* 'सुरतवर्द्धनं श्रीकृष्णार्जनं स्मरितवेद्युना सुदुःखं नृजितं  
इतररागविष्कारार्थं कृत्वा वितरबीर नन्दोऽधरावतन् ।'

श्रीमद्भगवत् ।

where disciples, and teachers, teachings, books, and even the ideas of fear of God, and joys of heaven, have all been thrown away. And what remains is the madness of love. It is the forgetfulness of everything, and the lover sees nothing in the world except Krishna, and Krishna alone. Then he sees Krishna in the face of every being, and his own face shines like Krishna, for he finds his own soul to be identical with Krishna, the Infinite Love. Do not waste your time upon details. Take up the framework, the essence of the life. There may be many historical discrepancies, there may be interpolations in the life of Krishna. All these things may be true, but at the same time, there must have been a basis, a foundation for this new and tremendous departure from the old ways of worship. Taking the life of any other sage or prophet we find that that prophet is only the evolution of what had gone before him, we find that that prophet is only preaching the ideas that had been scattered about his own country, even in his own times. Great doubts may exist even as to whether that prophet existed or not. But here I challenge any one to show whether the ideals of work for work's sake, love for love's sake, duty for duty's sake—were not original with Krishna, and there is no denying, for, as such, there must have been some one with whom these ideals originated. These could not have been borrowed from anybody else. These were not floating about the atmosphere when Krishna was born, but Krishna, himself was the first preacher of



them and his disciple Vyása took them up and preached them unto mankind. This is the highest ideal to picture. And the highest ideal we get out of Vyása is his representation of Krishna as the shepherd of the Brindávan, *Gopi-Janavallabha*, the ideal lover of the Gopis. When that madness comes in your brain, when you understand the blessed Gopis, then you will understand what love is. When the whole world will vanish, when all other considerations will die out, when you will become pure-hearted, and with no other aim, not even that of the search after truth, then and then alone will rush upon you the madness of that love, the strength and the power of that infinite love which the Gopis had, that love for love's sake. That is the goal. When you have got that you have got everything.

The  
Krishna of  
the Maha-  
bharata, the  
preacher  
of the  
Gita.

We come down to a lower stratum when we come to consider Krishna as the preacher of the Gita. There is an attempt in India now which is like putting the cart before the horse. Many of our people think that the painting of Krishna as the lover of the Gopis is something unbefitting, for the Europeans do not like it. Dr. So-and-so does not like it. Certainly then, that episode of his life will have to be given up, for, without the sanction of the Europeans how can Krishna live? They say that in the Mahabharata there is no mention of the Gopis except in one or two un-important places,—as for example, in the prayer of Draupadi and in the speech of Sisupala—and these are to be regarded as interpolations. Why? Because

what Europe does not want must be thrown off—Europe, which is steeped in commercialism, where even the ideal of religion has become commercial, for people there are all trying to go to heaven in return for some pious work done here! Certainly, the Gopis can have no place in such a system of thought as that of Europe. As I have told you, from Krishna of Brindavan, the ideal lover, we come down next to a lower stratum of his life in the Krishna of Mahabharata, the preacher of the Gítá. No better commentary has been written or can be written of the Upanishads than the Gítá. The Upanishads, the essence of the Srutis, is hard to be understood, seeing that there are so many commentators, each one trying to interpret them in his own way. Therefore, the Lord Himself, who is the inspirer of the Srutis, came in the person of Krishna to show us the meaning of them as the preacher of the Gítá, and to-day, India wants nothing better, the world wants nothing better than that method of interpreting the Upanishads that he gave. It is a wonder that subsequent interpreters of the Scriptures could not catch his meaning, could not catch the drift of his thoughts. For what do we find in modern commentators? One non-dualistic commentator takes up an Upanishad and finds that there are so many dualistic passages in it and he twists and tortures them so as to bring them all into his own meaning. Again, a dualistic commentator comes and finding in it many non-dualistic texts begins to torture them in order to bring them

All religions  
are true  
and each is  
good in its  
own place  
is the  
essence of  
the Gita.

all round to a dualistic meaning. But you find no such attempt at torturing any one of them in the *Gítá*. They are all right, says the Lord, slowly and gradually the human soul comes up and up, step after step, from the gross to the fine, from the fine to the finer until it reaches the absolute, the goal. That is what you find in the *Gítá*. Even the *Karma Kánda* is taken up by it, and it is shown that although it cannot give salvation direct, it is valid ; so are images valid indirectly, and ceremonies, forms, everything is valid in that way, only with one condition, purity of the heart. For worship is valid and leads to the goal if the heart is pure and the heart is sincere ; and all these various modes of worship are necessary, else, why should they be here at all? Religions and sects are not the work of hypocrites and wicked people who invented them to get a little money, as some of our modern men think. However reasonable that explanation may be, it is not true, they were not invented that way at all. They are the outcome of the necessity of the human soul. They are all here to satisfy the hankering and thirst of different classes of human minds, and you need not preach against them. The day when that necessity will cease they will vanish and so long as that necessity remains they must be there, in spite of your preaching, in spite of your criticisms. You may bring the sword or the gun into play, you may deluge the world with human blood, but so long as there is the necessity for images and symbols, they must

remain and so long the forms and all the various steps in religion will also remain. And we understand from the Lord Sri Krishna why they should remain.

A rather sad chapter of India's history comes now. In the *Gítá* we already hear the distant sound of conflicts of sects, and the Lord Krishna, the greatest teacher and preacher comes in the middle to harmonise them all. "In Me they are all strung like pearls upon a thread."\* We already hear the distant sounds, the murmurs of the conflict, and possibly there was a period of harmony and calmness when it broke anew, not only on religious grounds, but most possibly on grounds of caste privileges also, the fight between the two powerful factors in our community, the kings and the priests. And on the topmost crest of this wave that deluged India for nearly a thousand years we see another glorious figure, and that is our Gautama Sákyamuni. We worship Him as God incarnate, the greatest, the boldest preacher of morality that the world ever saw, the greatest *Karma Yogi*. He was, as it were, the same Krishna born again, to show how to make his theories practical and there came once again the same voice that preached in the *Gítá*, "The least bit done of this religion saves from great fear."† "Women, or Vaisyas, even Súdras, all

Caste-conflicts and internal struggles when Buddha arose.

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\* "मयि सर्वमिदं प्रीतं गुणे भविवशाद्भव ।" गीता

† "सर्वस्वमप्यस्य शरीरस्य वाचते महती भयात् ।" गीता

Buddha  
and Krishna :  
their simi-  
larities.

reach the highest goal.”\* Breaking the bondages of all, the chains of all, declaring liberty to all to reach the highest goal, came again the words of the Gîtâ, “Even in this life they have conquered heaven whose minds are firmly fixed upon the sameness of all beings, for God is equally in all ; therefore, such are said to be living in God.”† The similarity of Buddha’s teaching with the ideas of the Gîtâ makes us think as if the preacher of the Gîtâ himself has returned in the form of the Sakyamuni, as a living example of the truth of his preaching, to make at least one part of it practical. And this was Sakyamuni, who rejected even the language of the gods to speak in the language of the people so that he might reach the hearts of the people, who gave up a throne to live with the beggars, and the poor, and the downcast, who pressed the Pariah in love unto his breast like a second Rama, was the very ideal of a preacher to the poor and the miserable. But his work had one great defect and we are suffering for that even to-day. We are not blaming the pure and glorious Lord Buddha, but unfortunately his high ideals could not be well assimilated by the different uncivilised and uncultured races of mankind who flocked within the fold at his time. These races, with varieties of superstition and hideous worship, rushed within the fold of Buddhism

The dege-  
neration of  
Buddhism ;  
its cause  
and effects.

\* “क्षिती वेद्यास्तथा मुद्रास्तोऽपि बालि परा मति ।” गीता

† “इहेव मैर्जितः स्वर्गो येषां साध्वे स्थितं मनः । निर्वीर्यं हि समं  
ब्रह्म तस्माद्ब्रह्मणि ते स्थिताः ॥” गीता

and for a time appeared as if they had become civilised, but before a century had passed they brought out their snakes, their ghosts, and all the other things their ancestors used to worship, and thus the whole of India became a degraded sink of superstition. The earlier Buddhists, in their rage against the killing of animals, had denounced also the harmless sacrifices of the Vedas, which were used to be practised daily in every home. People then had to keep a fire burning in their homes to pour oblations of cooked food into it, and that was all the paraphernalia of worship they required. These sacrifices were now obliterated, and in their place came gorgeous temples, gorgeous ceremonies, and gorgeous priests, the remnants of which you see in India in modern times. I smile when I read books, written by some modern people who ought to have known better, that Buddha was the destroyer of Brahminical idolatry. Little do they know that Buddhism created Brahminism and idolatry in India. There was a book written about a year or two ago by a Russian gentleman who claimed to have found out a very curious life of Jesus Christ, and in one part of the book he says that Christ went to the Temple of Jagannath to study with the Brahmins, but became disgusted with their exclusiveness and their idols, and so went to the Lamas of Tibet instead, became perfect, and went home. To any man who knows anything about Indian History that very line proves that the whole thing was a fraud, because the Temple of Jagannath

is an old Buddhistic Temple. We had to take this and other temples also, from their hands in after times, and rehinduise them by attaching Vedantic ideals in the forms and ceremonies of worship in them, and may be, we shall have to do many things like that yet. At that time there was not one Brahmin in the temple of Jagannáth and yet we are told by this Russian gentleman that Jesus Christ came to study with the Brahmins there! Thus, as I have said, Buddhism brought in gorgeous temples and ceremonies in India but in later times these became the cause of its degeneration and in spite of its preaching of mercy unto animals, in spite of its being a sublime ethical religion, in spite of its hair-splitting discussions about the existence of or the non-existence of a permanent soul, the whole building tumbled down piece-meal ; and the ruin was simply hideous ! I have neither the time nor the inclination to describe to you the hideousness that came in the wake of Buddhism. The most hideous ceremonies, the most horrible, the most obscene books that human hands ever wrote, or the human brain ever conceived, the most bestial forms that ever have passed under the name of religion, have all been the creation of degraded Buddhism.

Advent of  
Sankara and  
reconquest  
of Buddhism  
by Vedanta.

But India has to live, and the spirit of the Lord descended again. He who declared that, "I will come whenever virtue subsides" came again, and this time the manifestation was in the South, and up rose that young Brahmin of whom it has been declared

that at the age of sixteen he had completed all his writings, the marvellous boy Sankaráchárya ! The writing of this boy of sixteen are the wonders of the modern world, such was the boy ! He wanted to bring back the Indian world to its pristine purity but think of the extent of the task before him. I have told you a few facts about the state of things that existed in India at his time. The evils that you are trying to reform to-day are but remnants of that period of degradation. The Tartars, the Belluchis, and many other barbarous races of mankind, came to India then and became Buddhists. These entered into our society but still kept fast to their hideous racial customs ; and the whole of our national life became mixed up with the most horrible and the most bestial customs thereby. That was the inheritance which Sankara got from the Buddhists and from his time to this, is still going on in India a re-conquest of this Buddhistic degradation by the Vedánta. It is not yet finished. Sankara came, a great philosopher, and showed that the real essence of Buddhism and that of the Vedánta are not very different, but that the disciples did not understand the master, and had degraded themselves, denied the existence of the soul and of God, and had become atheists. That was what Sankara showed, and all the Buddhists began to return to the old religion. But they had become accustomed to forms and to ceremonies ; what could be done ?

Now came the brilliant Rámánuja. Sankara



Ramanuja  
and his  
work.

with his great intellect, I am afraid, had not as great a heart. Rámánuja's heart was greater. He felt for the down-trodden, he sympathised with them. He took up the ceremonies, the accretions that had gathered, made them pure so far as could be, and instituted new ceremonies, new methods of worship, for the people who absolutely required them. At the same time he opened the door to the highest spiritual worship, from the Brahmin to the Pariah. That was Rámánuja's work. That work rolled on, invaded the North, and was taken up by some great leaders there, much later, during the Mahommedan rule, and the brightest of these prophets of modern times in the North was Chaitanya. And you may mark one characteristic of the reform since the time of Rámánuja,—the opening of the door of spirituality to everyone. That was the watchword of all the prophets before Sankara. Sankara should be represented as rather exclusive on this point. But like the declarations of the Lord Buddha the exclusiveness that has been attributed to Sankara's teachings is most possibly not due to his teachings but to the incapacity of his disciples. A few words on the great northern sage, Chaitanya, now, and then I will finish. He represented the mad love of the Gopis. Born of one of the most rationalistic Brahmin families of the day, he became a professor of logic and devoted himself to fighting and gaining word-victories—for, this he had learnt from his childhood as the highest ideal of life. Through the mercy of a certain sage, the

Chaitanya

whole life of this man became changed and he gave up his fighting, his quarrels, his professorship of logic, and became one of the greatest teachers of *Bhakti* the world has ever known,—the mad Chaitanya. His *Bhakti* rolled over the whole land of Bengal bringing solace to every one. His love knew no bounds. The saint or the sinner, the Hindu or the Mahommedan, the pure or the impure, the prostitute, the street-walker—all had a share in his love, all had a share in his mercy. Even to the present day, although greatly degenerated, as everything does degenerate, his church is yet the refuge of the poor, of the down-trodden, of the outcast, of the weak, of those who have been rejected by all society. But I must remark for truth's sake that in the philosophic sects we find wonderful liberalism. There is not a man who follows Sankara who will say that all the different sects of India are really different. At the same time he was a stern upholder of exclusiveness as regards caste. But in every Vaishnavite preacher while we find a wonderful liberalism in his teaching on caste questions, we find exclusiveness as regards religious questions. Therefore I say that, Sankara had a great head, while Rámánuja and Chaitanya had a large heart.

The aspects of liberalism in the preachers of Jnana and Bhakti.

In the beginning of the nineteenth century the time was ripe for one to be born as the embodiment of the virtues of both the head and the heart, the time was ripe for one to be born who in one body would have the brilliant intellect of Sankara and the wonderfully expansive, infinite heart of Chaitanya,

Rama-  
krishna  
Parama-

hamsa and  
the unity  
and  
harmony  
of all  
religions.

one who would see in every sect the same spirit working, the same God, as well as see God in every being, one whose heart would weep for the poor, for the weak, for the out cast, for the down-trodden, for every one in this world, inside India or outside India, and at the same time whose grand, brilliant intellect would conceive of such noble thoughts as would harmonise all conflicting sects, not only in India but outside of India and bring the marvellous harmony of the universal religion in which both the virtues of head and heart have room for existence. Such a man was born, and I had the good fortune to sit under his feet for years. The time was ripe, it was necessary that such a man should be born, and he came, and the most wonderful part of it was that his life's work lay near a city which was full of western thoughts, which had run mad after occidental ideas, a city which had become more Europeanised than any other city in India. There he was born, without any book learning whatsoever. With his great intellect never could he write his own name, but everybody, the most brilliant graduates of our university, found in him an intellectual giant. That was a strange man. It is a long long story, and I have no time to tell anything about him to-night. I had better stop by mentioning the name only of the great Sri Rámakrishna, who is the fulfilment of the Indian sages, the sage for the present time, one whose teaching is just now, in the modern era, the most beneficial. And mark the divine power working

behind the man ! The son of a poor priest, born in one of the wayside villages of Bengal, unknown and unthought of, is worshipped literally by thousands in Europe and America to-day, and will be worshipped by thousands more to-morrow. Who knows the plans of the Lord ? Now, my brothers, if you do not see the hand, the finger, of Providence in it it is because you are blind, born blind indeed. If time comes, and another opportunity, I will speak to you about him more fully ; only let me say now that if I have told you in my life one word of truth it was his and his alone, and if I have told you many things which were not true, which were not correct, which were not beneficial to the human race, they were all mine, and on me is the responsibility.

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## THE WORK BEFORE US.

( DELIVERED AT MADRAS )

The problem of life is becoming deeper and broader every day as the world moves on. The watchword and the essence of religion have been preached in the principle of the solidarity of all life, in the days of yore, when that truth was first discovered by Vedanta. One atom in this universe cannot move without dragging the whole world on with it. There cannot be any forward progress without the whole world following in the wake, and it is becoming every day clearer that the solution of any problem can never be attained on racial, or national, or any such narrow grounds. Every idea has to become broad till it covers the whole of this world, every aspiration must go on increasing till it has engulfed the whole of humanity, nay, the whole of life, within its scope. And, if I may be permitted to say so, our country has not been what she was in the past, for the last few centuries. We find that one of the causes which led to this degeneration was the narrowing of our view, the narrowing of the scope of our actions. Two curious nations have been there, sprung of the same race, but placed in different circumstances and environments, working out the problems of life, each in his own particular way, the ancient Hindu and the ancient Greek. The Indian

The solution of the problem of life can only be made on universal and not racial or national basis.

Aryan with his gaze fixed to the North, bound by the snow caps of the Himalayas, with vast and rolling fresh-water rivers surrounding him in the plains, with primæval forests which to him seemed to be stretched to the ends of the world, turned his vision inward. With the natural instinct, the superfine brain of the Aryan and this sublime scenery surrounding him, the result was that he became naturally introspective. Analysis of his own mind became the great object with the Indo-Aryan. With the Greek, on the other hand, arriving at a part of the earth which was more beautiful than sublime,—the beautiful islands of the Grecian Archipelago,—where nature all around was generous yet simple, the mind went outside. It wanted to analyse the external world. And, as a result, we find that from India have sprung all the introspective analytical sciences, and from Greece all sciences of empirical generalisation. The Hindu mind went on in its own direction and produced the most marvellous results. There is no comparison, even at the present day, with the tremendous logical capacity and such other brain power which the Hindus possess. And we all know that our boys, in competition with the boys of any other country are remarkably successful. But perhaps one or two centuries before the Mahommedan conquest of India, this natural brain-power of the nation became so much confined to exaggerated expression of details in every thing that it degraded itself and we find this degradation in art, in music, in sciences and everything else

The characteristics of the Hindu and the Greek minds.

The degeneration of the national vigour of the Hindus.

besides, in India of the time. No more was there that broad and sublime conception of art, no more the symmetry of form, but a general attempt at the ornate and florid style in everything. The originality of the race was lost. The soul-stirring phrases of the classic Sanskrit music, where each note stands, as it were, on its own feet, and produces marvellous harmony, was there no more and each note had lost its individuality. The whole music thus became a jumble of notes, a confused mass of curves, and that is the sign of degradation in music. So, if you analyse all the idealistic conceptions of the time, you will find the same attempt at ornate figures, and loss of originality. And even in religion, the special field of the nation, came the most horrible degradations. What more can you expect of a race which for hundreds of years has been busy in discussing such momentous problems as whether one should drink a glass of water with the right hand or the left? What more degradation can there be than that the greatest minds of a country have been for several hundreds of years discussing about the purity of the kitchen and the defilement of one's person by the touch of another and the penances for such happenings. The most glorious truths of the Vedanta, the sublimest conceptions of God and soul ever preached on earth, were half-lost, buried in the forests, preserved by a few Sannyasins while the rest of the nation discussed the momentous questions of defilement by touch of one's person, dress and food.

The Mahommedans gave us many of the good things which they had, but they could not bring vigour into the race, till, for good or evil, the English conquest of India took place. Of course every conquest is an evil, for all foreign government is an evil ; but even through evil comes good sometimes, and the great good of this English conquest is that Greece and India have met thereby, for, England, nay, the whole of Europe, has to thank Greece for her civilisation. It is Greece that speaks through everything in Europe. Every building, every piece of furniture has the impress of Greece upon it ; European science and art are nothing but Grecian. To-day the ancient Greek is meeting the ancient Hindu on the soil of India. Thus, slowly and silently, the leaven has come and the broadening, the life-giving, revivalist movement that we see all round us has been worked out by these two forces together. A broader and more generous conception of life is before us, and, although at first we have been deluded a little and wanting to narrow things down, we are finding out to-day that these generous impulses, which are at work, these broader conceptions of life, are the logical fulfilment of what is in our ancient books. They are the carrying out to its rigorously logical effect the primary conceptions of our own ancestors ;—that is, to become broad, to go out, to amalgamate, to universalise, the end and aim of what they thought. And all this time we have been making ourselves smaller and smaller,

English conquest means the bringing of Grecian influence in India.

Our Scriptures present the larger view of life.



dissociating ourselves, contrary to the plans laid down in our scriptures.

Several dangers are in our way to that goal and one is that of the extreme conception that we are *the* people in the world. With all my love for India and with all my patriotism and veneration for the ancients, I cannot but think that we have to learn many things from the world. We must be always ready to sit at the feet of all, to learn what they have to teach, for, mark you, every one can teach us something. Says our great law-giver, Manu : "Receive knowledge even from the low born, and learn from the man of the lowest birth the road to heaven." We, therefore, as true children of Manu, must obey his commands, and be ready to learn the lessons of this life, or the life hereafter, from any one who can teach us. At the same time we must not forget that we have also to teach a great lesson to the world. We cannot do without the world outside India ; it was our foolishness that we thought we could, and we have paid the penalty by about a thousand years of slavery. That we did not go out to compare ourselves with other nations, did not mark the workings that have been all around us, has been the one great cause of this degradation of the Indian mind. We have paid the penalty ; let us do it no more. All such foolish ideas that Indians must not go out of India are childish. They must be knocked on the head ; the more you go out and travel among the nations of the world, the better for you and for your

We must  
go out to  
learn as  
well as to  
teach.

country. If you had done that for hundreds of years past you would not be here to-day, at the feet of every nation that wants to rule India. The first manifest effect of life is expansion, you must expand if you want to live. The moment you have ceased to expand, death is upon you, danger is ahead. I went to America and Europe, to which you so kindly allude ; I had to, because that is the first sign of the revival of national life, expansion. This national revival, in the course of its expansion, threw me off, as it were, and thousands will be thrown off in that way. Mark my words, it has to come if this nation lives at all. This expansion, therefore, is the greatest of the signs of the revival of national life, and through this expansion, our offering to the general mass of human knowledge, our part in the general upheaval of the world, is going out to the different countries in it. This is not a new thing. Those of you who think that the Hindus have been always confined within the four walls of their country, through all ages, are entirely mistaken ; you have not studied the old books, you have not studied the history of the race aright. Each nation must give in order to live. When you give life you will have life ; what you receive from all you must pay for by giving to all others ; that we have been living for so many thousands of years is a fact that stares us in the face and the solution of that fact is that we have been always giving to the outside world, whatever the ignorant may think. But the gift of India is the gift of reli-

Wisdom  
and philo-  
sophy have  
ever been  
the gift of  
India to  
the world.

gion, and philosophy, and wisdom, and spirituality, and religion does not want cohorts to march before its path and clear its way for it. Wisdom and philosophy do not want to be carried on torrents of blood. Wisdom and philosophy do not march upon bloody human bodies, do not march with violence but come on the wings of peace and love, and it has always been so. A young lady in London asked me, "What have you Hindus done? You never even conquered a single nation." That is true for the Englishman, the brave, the heroic, the Kshatriya—to him conquest is the greatest glory that one can have. That is true from his point of view but from ours it is quite the opposite. If I ask myself what has been the cause of India's greatness, I answer, "The cause is that we have never conquered." That is our glory. You are hearing every day, and some time I am sorry to say from men, who ought to know better, denunciations of our religion, because it is not a conquering religion. To my mind that is the argument which proves that our religion is truer than any other religion. It never conquered, it never shed blood, its mouth always shed words of blessing, of peace, words of love and sympathy for all. It is here, and here alone, that the ideals of toleration were first preached; and it is here alone that toleration and sympathy were made practical. It is theoretical in all other countries. It is here that the Hindu builds mosques for the Mahomedans and churches for the Christians. So, gentlemen, our message has gone out to the world many

a time, but slowly, silently, unperceived. It is on a par with everything in India. The one characteristic of Indian thought is its silence, its calmness. At the same time the tremendous power that is behind it is never expressed by violence. It is always the silent mesmerism of Indian thought. If a foreigner takes up our literature, it is at first disgusting to him, there is not the same stir perhaps, the same amount of go that rouses him instantly elsewhere. Compare the tragedies of Europe with our tragedies. The one is full of action that rouses you for the moment, but when it is over, there comes the reaction, and everything is gone, washed off your brains, as it were. Indian tragedies are like the mesmerist's power, quiet, silent, but, as you go on studying them, they are upon you ; you cannot move ; you are bound ; and whoever has dared to touch our literature has felt the bondage and is bound for ever.

Silence and calmness the characteristic of Indian thought.

Like the gentle dew that falls unseen and unheard and yet brings into blossom the fairest of roses, has been the contribution of India to the thought of the world. Silent, unperceived, yet omnipotent in its effect, it has revolutionised the thought of the world, yet nobody knows when it did so. It was once remarked to me how difficult it was to ascertain the name of any writer in India, to which I replied, that that was peculiarly Indian. They are not like modern writers, who take ninety per cent. of the ideas of other people from other writers and yet take care to write a preface to the effect that they are

responsible for all the ideas contained in their books. The great master minds, producing momentous results in the hearts of mankind, were content to write their books without even putting their names to them, were content to offer the thoughts to the society and die quietly. Who knows the writers of our philosophy, who knows the writers of the Puránas? They all passed under the generic name of Vyása, and Kapila, and so on. These writers were the true children of Sri Krishna. They were followers of the Gitá ; they practically carried out the great mandate, "To work you have the right, but not to the fruits thereof."

Thus, gentlemen, India is working upon the world but one condition is necessary for her work. Thoughts, like merchandise, can only run through channels made by somebody. Roads have to be made before even thought can travel from one place to another, and whenever in the history of the world a great conquering nation has arisen linking the different parts of the world together, then has poured through these channels the thought of India, thus entering into the veins of every race. Before even the Buddhists were born, there are evidences accumulating every day that Indian thought penetrated the outside world. Vedánta, before Buddhism, had penetrated into China, into Persia, and the Islands of the Eastern Archipelago. Again, when the mighty mind of the Greek had linked the different parts of the Eastern world together, there came Indian thought ;

Indian  
thought  
penetrated  
the world  
in the past.

and Christianity with all its boasted civilisation, is a collection of little bits from the Indian mind. Ours is the religion of which Buddhism, with all its greatness, is a rebel child, and Christianity, a very patchy imitation. One such opportunity has again arrived. There is this mighty power of England which has linked the different parts of the world together. English roads are no more content like Roman roads to run over lands, but they have ploughed the deep in all directions. From ocean to ocean run the roads of England. Every part of the world has been linked to every other part and electricity plays a most marvellous role as messenger. Under all these circumstances we find India reviving again and ready to give her own quota to the progress and civilisation of the world. The fact that I have been forced, as it were, by Nature, to go over to America and preach to England is one such consequence of that. For every one of us ought to have seen that the time for it had arrived. So everything looks propitious, and Indian thought, philosophical and spiritual, must once more go over and conquer the world. The problem before us, therefore, is assuming huge proportions every day. It is not that we must revive our own country only, for that is a small matter. I am an imaginative man—and, my idea is the conquest of the whole world by the Hindu race.

The opportunity has come for it to go out again.

There have been great conquering races in the world. We also have been great conquerors. The story of our conquest is the conquest of religion and

Conquest of the world by India through

religion and  
spirituality.

spirituality as are recorded in the rock-edicts of that great Emperor of India, Asoka. Once more the world must be conquered by India. This is the dream of my life and I wish that each one of you who hear me to-day should have the same dream in your minds and stop not till you have realised the dream. They will tell you every day that we had better look to our own homes first and then go to work outside. But I will tell you in plain language that you work best when you work for others. The best work that you ever did for yourselves was when you worked for others, trying to disseminate your ideas in foreign languages, beyond the seas, and this very meeting is a proof how the attempt to enlighten other countries with your thoughts is helping your own country. One-fourth of the effect that has been produced in this country by my going to England and America would not have been brought about had I confined my ideas only to India. This is the great ideal before us, and every one must be ready for it,—the conquest of the whole world by India—nothing less than that, and we must all get ready for it, strain every nerve for it. Let them come and flood the land with their armies, never mind. Up, India, and conquer the world with spirituality! Aye, as has been declared on this soil first, love must conquer hatred, hatred cannot conquer itself. Materialism and all its miseries can never be conquered by materialism. Armies when they attempt to conquer armies only multiply and make brutes of humanity. Spirituality

must conquer the West. Slowly they are finding it out that what they want is spirituality to preserve them as nations. They are waiting for it, they are eager for it. But where is the supply to come from? Where are the men ready to go out to every country in the world with the messages of the great sages of India? Where are the men who are ready to sacrifice everything so that this message shall reach every corner of the world? Such heroic souls are wanted to help the spread of truth. Such heroic workers are wanted to go abroad and help to disseminate the great truths of the Vedānta. The world wants it ; without it the world will be destroyed. The whole of the Western world is on a volcano which may burst tomorrow. They have searched every corner of the world and have found no respite. They have drunk deep of the cup of pleasure and found it to be vanity. Now is the time to work so that India's spiritual ideas may penetrate deep into the West. Therefore, you young men of Madras, I specially ask you to remember this. We must go out, we must conquer the world through our spirituality and philosophy. There is no other alternative, we must do it or die. The only condition of national life, of awakened and vigorous national life, is the conquest of the world by Indian thought.

The west  
wants  
spirituality.

At the same time, we must not forget that what I mean by the conquest of the world by spiritual thought is the sending of the life-giving principles, not the hundreds of superstitions that we have been



hugging to our bosom for centuries. These have to be weeded out, even on this soil, and thrown aside, so that they may die for ever. These are the causes of the degradation of the race and will lead to softening of the brain. That brain which cannot think of higher and nobler thoughts, which has lost all power of originality, which has lost all vigour, that brain which is always poisoning itself with all sorts of little superstitions passing under the name of religion, we must beware of. In our sight here in India, there are several dangers. Of these the two, the Scylla and the Charybdis, rank materialism and its opposite, arrant superstition, must be avoided. There is the man to-day who after drinking the cup of Western wisdom, thinks that he knows everything. He laughs at the ancient sages. All Hindu thought to him is arrant trash, philosophy, mere child's prattle, and religion, the superstition of fools. On the other hand, there is the man educated, but is a sort of monomaniac who runs to the other extreme ; he wants to explain the omen of this and that. He has philosophical and metaphysical and all kind of most puerile explanations for the superstitions that belong to his peculiar caste, or his peculiar gods, or his peculiar village. Every little village superstition is to him a mandate of the Vedas, and according to him, upon the carrying out of these depends the national life. You must beware of this. I would rather see everyone of you rank atheists than superstitious fools for the atheist is alive : you can make something out of him ; he is

Beware of  
superstitions  
and mystery.

not dead. But if superstition enters, the brain is gone, the brain is softened, degradation has seized upon the life. Avoid these two. Brave, bold men, these are what we want. What we want are vigour in the blood, strength in the nerves, iron muscles and nerves of steel, no softening, namby-pamby ideas. Avoid these. Avoid all mystery. There is no mystery in religion. Is there any mystery in the Vedānta or in the Vedas or in the Samhitas, or in the Purāṇas? What secret societies did the sages of yore establish to preach their religion? What sleight of hand tricks are there recorded as used by them to bring their grand truths to humanity? Mystery-mongering and superstition is always a sign of weakness, always a sign of degradation and of death. Therefore beware of it, be strong, stand on your feet. Great things are there, most marvellous things. We may call them supernatural things so far as our ideas of nature go, but not one of these things is a mystery. It was never preached on this soil that the truths of religion were mysteries or that they were the property of secret societies sitting on snowcaps in the Himalayas. I have been in the Himalayas. You have not been. It is several hundreds of miles from your homes. I am a Sannyāsin and I have been for the last fourteen years on my feet. These mysterious societies do not exist anywhere. Do not run after these superstitions. Better for you and for the race that you become rank atheists, because being such you would at least have

strength, but the other way is that of degradation and death. Shame on humanity that strong men should spend their time on these superstitions, spend all their time in inventing allegories to explain the most rotten superstitions of the world. Be bold ; do not try to explain everything. The fact is we have many superstitions, many a bad spot, and a bad sore on our body—these have to be excised, cut off, and destroyed—but these do not destroy our religion, our national life, our spirituality. Every principle of religion is safe and the sooner these black spots are removed the better the principles will shine, the more gloriously. Stick to them.

You hear of claims made by every one of the different religions as being the universal religion of the world. Let me tell you in the first place that perhaps there never will be such a thing, but if there is a religion which can lay that claim, it is only ours and that of none else because every other religion depends on some person or persons. All the other religions have been built round the life of what they think a historical man ; and what they think the strength of their religion is really its weakness for disprove the history of the man in one such and the whole building tumbles to the ground. Half the lives of these great founders of religions have been broken into pieces, and the other half doubted very seriously. As such, every truth that had its sanction in their words only, vanishes into air again. But the truths of our religion, although we have persons by the score, do

not depend on them. The glory of Krishna is not that he was Krishna, but that he was that great teacher of Vedānta. If he had not been so, his name would have died out of India as the name of Buddha has. Thus our allegiance is to the principles always and not to the persons. Persons are but the embodiments, the illustrations of the principles. If the principles are there the persons will come by the thousands and millions. If the principle is safe, persons like Buddha will be born by hundreds and thousands. But if the principle is lost and forgotten and the whole of national life tries to cling round a so-called historical person, woe unto that religion, danger unto that religion. Ours is the only religion, therefore, that does not depend on a person ; it is based upon principles. At the same time, there is room for millions of persons in it. There is ample ground in it for introducing persons, but each one of them must be an illustration of its principles. We must not forget that. These principles of our religion are all safe, and it should be the life work of every one of us to keep them safe, to keep them free from the accumulating dirt and dust of ages. It is strange that in spite of the degradation that seized upon the race again and again, these principles of the Vedānta were never tarnished. No one, however wicked, ever dared to throw dirt upon them. Our scriptures are the best preserved scriptures in the world. Compared with other books there have been no interpolations, no text-torturing, no destroying of the essence

Vedantism  
the only  
universal  
religion.

of the thought. It is there just as it was from the very first, directing the human mind towards the ideal, the goal. You find that these texts have been commented upon by different commentators, preached by great teachers, and acts founded upon them, and you find again that in these texts of the Vedas there are various ideas, apparently contradictory. There are certain texts which are entirely dualistic, others are entirely monistic. The dualistic commentator, knowing no better, wishes to knock the monistic texts on the head. Preachers and priests want to explain them in the dualistic way. The monistic commentator serves the dualistic texts in similar fashion. Now this is not the fault of the Vedas. It is foolish to attempt to prove that the whole of the Vedas are dualistic. It is equally foolish to attempt to prove that the whole of the Vedas are non-dualistic. They are dualistic and non-dualistic both. We understand it better to-day in the light of newer ideas. These are but several conceptions leading to the final conclusion and all these conceptions are necessary for the evolution of the mind, therefore the Vedas preach them. In mercy to the human race the Vedas show the various steps to the higher goal. Not that they are contradictory, vain words used by the Vedas to delude children; they are necessary, not only for children but for many a grown-up man. So long as we have a body and so long as we feel the external world with our five senses we have to worship a personal God. For as the great Rāmaṇuja has proved, the ideas

The Vedas  
preach  
evolution of  
the mind.

of God, of the external nature and the individualised soul, go together.' If you take one you have to take the others also. You cannot avoid it. Therefore as long as you see the external world, to avoid believing in a Personal God and a personal soul is arrant lunacy. But there may be times in the lives of sages when the human mind transcends, as it were, its own limitations, when man goes even beyond nature, even beyond the state which has been described in the *Srutis*, as, "From whence the words fall back with the mind, without reaching the place. There the eyes cannot reach, nor the ears, we cannot say that we know it, we cannot say that we will know it." Even there the human soul rises transcending all limitations, and then and then alone, flashes upon it the great truth of Monism that the soul and the whole universe are one, that the soul and the Brahman are one. And this conclusion you will find has not only been reached through knowledge and philosophy, but also through the power of love. You read in the *Bhagavat* that when Krishna disappeared from amongst the Gopis and they were bewailing his disappearance, the thought of Krishna became so prominent in their minds at last that forgetting their own bodies, they thought themselves to be Krishna and each one of them began to decorate herself and to play as he did. We understand from this that the identity of the worshipper and the worshipped comes even through love. An ancient Persian Sufi poet gives expression to it in one of his poems, saying

—“I came to the beloved and beheld the door was closed ; I knocked at the door and from inside came a voice, ‘Who is there?’ I replied, ‘I am.’ The door did not open. A second time I came and knocked at the door, and the same voice asked, ‘Who is there?’ ‘I am so and so.’ The door did not open. A third time I came and the same voice asked, ‘Who is there?’ ‘I am thou, my love,’ and the door opened.” Thus there are many ways to reach this identity and we need not quarrel about them, even if there have been quarrels among the ancient commentators whom all of us ought to revere ; for, there is no limitation to knowledge and omniscience has never been the property of any one, in ancient or modern times. If there have been sages and Rishis in the past, be sure that there will be such even now. If there have been Vyāsas and Vālmikis and Sankarāchāryas in ancient times, why may not each one of you become like them.

One other thing you must always remember. In the scriptures of all the other nations inspiration is pointed out to be the authority. But this inspiration is limited to one or two or very few persons and through them the truth came to the masses and we have all to obey them. Truth came to Jesus of Nazareth and we must all obey him—we cannot have that inspired vision which was his and his alone. But truth came to the Rishis of India and will come to all who will become like them—the *mantra-drashṭas*, the seers of thought—not talkers, not book-swallowers,

not scholars, not philologists, but the direct seeds of their thought. Our scriptures assert: "The Self is not to be reached by too much talking, not even by the highest intellects, not even by the study of the Scriptures."\* Do you find in any other Scripture such a bold assertion as that—that not even by the study of the Scriptures will you reach the Truth? You must open your heart. Religion is not going to church, or putting marks on the forehead, or dressing in a peculiar fashion. You may paint yourselves in all the colors of the rainbow, but if the heart has not been opened, if you have not realised God, it is all vain. And if one has realised religion in his heart he needs not wait for any external color. We must not forget that putting colors on our body and all these external things are good so far as they help towards realisation, so far they are all welcome. But they are apt to degenerate, and instead of helping, they will retard if a man identifies religion with externalities. Then going to the temple becomes tantamount to spiritual life and giving something to a priest becomes tantamount to religious life.

Externalities  
are not  
Religion

These are dangerous and pernicious, and should be checked. Our Scriptures declare again and again that even the knowledge born of the external senses is not religion, and—religion is that which makes us realise the Unchangeable One. And that is religion

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\* "नामनामां प्रयत्नैव ज्ञानी  
न ज्ञेयतां न वदन्नुचितम्"



All of us  
must be  
Rishis

for every one. He who realises transcendental truth, he who realises the *Atman* in his own nature, he who comes face to face with God, sees God alone in everything, is a Rishi, no matter if he was born thousands of years ago, or if he is born thousands of years hence, he is the Rishi. There is no direct realisation of religion for you until you have become a Rishi. Then alone will real religion begin for you, now it is only the preparation. Then alone religion will dawn upon you, now you are only passing through a period of probation. We must therefore remember that our religion lays down distinctly and clearly that every one who wants salvation must pass through the stage of Rishihood—must become a *mantra-drashita*, must see God. That is salvation. And therefore, as that is the law laid down by our scriptures, it becomes easy to look into the scripture with our own eyes, understand its meaning for ourselves, and analyse just what we want in understanding the truth for ourselves. This is what has to be done. At the same time we must pay all reverence to the ancient sages for their work. They were great, these ancients, but we want to be greater. They did great work in the past, but we must do greater work than they. They had hundreds of Rishis in ancient India. We will have millions—we are going to have, and the sooner every one of you believes in this, the better for India, and the better for the world. Whatever you believe that you will be, if you believe yourselves to be bold, bold you will be. If you believe your-

Have faith  
and manifest  
the divinity  
within

selves to be sages, sages you will be to-morrow. There is nothing to obstruct you. For if there is one common doctrine that runs through all our apparently contradictory sects, it is that all glory, power and purity are within the soul already ; only, according to Rámánuja, the soul contracts and expands at times, and according to Sankara, it is through mere delusion that it thinks itself to be so limited. Never mind their differences when all admit the truth that all power is there—potential or manifest it is there. The sooner you believe that the better for you. All power is within you ; you can do anything and everything. Believe in that, do not believe that you are weak. You can do anything and everything without even the guidance of any one. All power is there. Stand up and express the Divinity that is within you.

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## THE FUTURE OF INDIA.

( ADDRESS DELIVERED AT MADRAS )

**Glories of  
India in  
the past.**

This is the ancient land where wisdom made its home before it went into any other country, India, whose influx of spirituality is represented on the material plane by vast rivers rolling into and making themselves one with the ocean that surround it and by the eternal Himalayas, rising tier after tier, with their snowcaps, looking as it were, into the very mysteries of heaven. Here is the same India whose soil has been trodden by the feet of the greatest sages that ever lived. Here first arose inquiries into the nature of man and the internal world. Here first arose the doctrines of the immortality of the soul, of the existence of a God, who is at the same time Supervisor, Ruler, as He is immanent in nature and in man ; and here the highest ideals of religion and philosophy attained their culminating points. This is the land from whence, like tidal waves, spirituality and philosophy have again and again marched out and deluged the world, and this is the land from whence once more such tides must proceed in order to bring life and vigour into the decaying races of mankind. It is the same India which has withstood the shocks of centuries, of hundreds of foreign invasions, of hundreds of upheavals of manners and customs. It is the same land which stands firmer than any rock in the world

in its undying vigour and indestructible life, a life which is of the same nature as that of the soul, without beginning and without end, immortal. And we are the children of such a country. Children of India, I am here to speak to you to-day about some practical things, and my object in reminding you about the glories of the past is simply this. Many times have I been told that looking into the past only degenerates and leads to nothing and so let us look to the future. That is true. But out of the past is built the future. Look back, therefore, as far as you can, drink deep of the eternal fountains that are behind, and after that, look forward, march forward, and make India brighter, greater, much higher, than she ever was. Our ancestors were great. We must know that first. We must learn the elements of our make-up, of the blood that courses in our veins. We must have faith in that blood, and in what it did in the past, and out of that faith and consciousness of past greatness we must build an India greater even than what she had been. There have been periods of decay and degradation. I do not attach much importance to them; we all know that; those were necessary. The mighty tree produces beautiful ripe fruit. That fruit falls to the ground, it decays, and rots, and out of that decay springs the root, and the future tree, perhaps mightier than the first one. The period of decay through which we have almost passed out was also necessary, for out of this decay is coming the India of the future; it is already sprouting, its

Have faith.  
Be conscious  
of past  
greatness  
and build  
an yet  
greater  
India.

first leaves are already out, and a mighty gigantic tree, which has been described in the Gita as the *urdhwamulam* (having its roots high in the Absolute), is already beginning to appear ; and it is about that that I am going to speak to you. The problems in India are more complicated, more momentous, than the problems in any other country. Race, Religion, Language, Government—all these together make a nation. The elements which compose all the other nations of the world are indeed very few when compared with those of our country. The Aryan, the Dravidian, the Tartar, the Turk, the Moghul, the European, all the nations of the world, as it were, have poured their blood into this land. Of languages the most wonderful conglomeration is here. Of manners and customs there are more differences between two Indian tribes than between the European and the Eastern nations. The only common ground that we have is our sacred traditions, our religion, and upon that we shall have to build. In Europe political ideas form the national unity. In Asia religious ideas form that unity. Unity in religion, therefore, is absolutely necessary as the first condition of the future of India. There must be the recognition of one religion throughout the length and breadth of this land. Now what do I mean by one religion? I do not use the term in the sense which it has among the Christians, or the Mahommedans, or the Buddhists, but what I mean by it is that our religion has certain common grounds that are common to all our sects, however varying

Religion,  
the only  
common  
ground of  
national  
unity in  
the East.

the conclusions may be from that. What I mean is that there are certain common grounds, and, within their limitations, this religion of ours admits of a marvellous variation, an infinite amount of liberty for people to think and live their own lives. We all know this fact, that is, those of us who have thought about it ; and what we want at present is to bring out these life-giving common principles of our religion and to let every man, woman, and child, throughout the length and breadth of this country, understand them, know them, and try to make them of practical use in their lives. This is the first step, therefore, that is to be taken. We see how in Asia and especially in India, race difficulties, linguistic difficulties, social difficulties, national difficulties all melt away before the unifying power of religion. We know that to the Indian mind there is nothing higher than religious ideals, the key-note of Indian life, and we can only work in the line of least resistance. Not only is it true that the ideal of religion is the highest ideal in the case of India but it is the only possible ideal of work here as well. Work in any other line, without first strengthening this, would be disastrous. Therefore, the first plank in the making of future India, the first step that is to be hewn out of that rock of ages, is this unifying of religion. We Hindus have to be taught that Dualists, Qualified Monists, or Monists, and all other sect which fall under those denominations such as, Saivites, Vaishnavites, Párasuramas, and so forth, have certain common ideas behind, that the

Unifying of religion is the first step in the making of future India.

time has come when, for the well-being of ourselves and of our race, we must give up our quarrels. Be sure about little differences that such are entirely wrong and that they are condemned by our scriptures. Our forefathers, those great men from whom we claim our descent, and whose blood is in our veins, forbade such things and will look down with contempt on their children who quarrel about such minute differences. As soon as we give those up, all other improvements will come.

Strengthen  
your  
spirituality  
and your  
national  
life will  
be fuller.

When the life-blood is strong and pure, no disease germ can live in the organism. Our life-blood is spirituality. If it flows clear, strong, pure and vigorous, all is well. Political, social, and other defects, even the poverty of the land, will all be cured if we can keep that blood pure. For as long as the blood flows pure the disease germs will be always thrown out of the system. From medical science we know that there must be two causes to produce a disease, some poison germ outside and the state of the body. Until the body is degraded to a lower vitality so that the germs may enter, thrive, and multiply therein, there is no power in any germ in the world to produce a disease in the system. In fact, millions of germs are continually passing through everyone's body but so long as it has a vigorous vitality it is never conscious of them. It is only when the body is weak that these germs take possession of the body and produce disease. Just so with the national life. It is when the national body is weak

that all sorts of germs enter and crowd into the political, the social, the educational and the intellectual organs of the system and produce disease. To remedy it, then, we must have to go to the root of the disease and cleanse the blood of all impurities. Therefore, as the one aim of medical science is to strengthen the human system by making the blood pure in order that the system be able to resist and throw out all external poisons, so, in bringing vigour and strength to our national life, our aim should be to purify its life-blood, religion. I am not going to discuss now whether it is right or not, whether it is beneficial or not, in the long run, to have our vital centre in religion, for, good or evil, it is there, you cannot get out of it, you have got it now and forever and you have to stand by it, even if you have not the same faith that I have in our religion. You are bound by it and if you give it up, you will be smashed to pieces. That is the life of our race, and that must be strengthened. You have withstood the shocks of centuries simply because you took great care of it, because, you sacrificed everything for it. Your forefathers underwent everything boldly, even death itself, but preserved their religion. Temple after temple was broken down by the foreign conqueror, and no sooner had the wave passed than the spire of the temple rose up again. Some of these old temples of Southern India, some like Somnath of Gujerat, will teach you volumes of wisdom, will give you a keener insight into the history of the race than any number of books. Mark how this temple of



Somnath bears the marks of a hundred attacks and a hundred regenerations, continually destroyed and continually springing up out of the ruins, rejuvenated and strong as ever! That is the national mind, that is the national life current. Follow it, and it leads to glory. Give it up and you die ; death will be the only result, annihilation the only effect, the moment you step beyond that life current. I do not mean to say that other things are not necessary. I do not mean to say that political or social improvements are not necessary, but what I mean is this, and I want you to bear it in mind, that they are all secondary in India, and religion is primary. The Indian mind is first religious, then everything else. So the religious life is to be strengthened. How to do it? I want to lay before you my ideas. These have been in my mind for a long time, years before I left the shores of Madras for America. That I went to America and England was simply for them and not because I cared at all for the Parliament of Religions, which simply gave me an opportunity. It is those ideas that took me all over the world. My idea is first of all to bring out these gems of spirituality that are stored up in our books, in the possession of a few, hidden in monasteries and forests, and not only to bring the knowledge contained in them from where it is hidden, but from the still more inaccessible chest, the language which has the incrustations of centuries upon it and in which it is preserved. In one word I want to make

Disseminate  
the spiritual  
ideas in  
our  
scriptures.

them popular, I want to bring out these ideas and let them be the common property of all, of every man in India, whether he knows the Sanskrit language or not. The great difficulty in the way is this Sanskrit language, this glorious language of ours, and this difficulty cannot be removed until, if it be possible, the whole of our nation consists of good Sanskrit scholars. You will understand the difficulty when I tell you that I have been studying this language all my life, and yet many books appear new to me. How much more difficult would it be then for people who never have time to study the language thoroughly? They must be taught the truth, of our scriptures, in the language of the people ; at the same time Sanskrit education must go along with it because the very sound of Sanskrit words brings the idea of a prestige and power and strength to the mind of the people. The attempts of the great Rámánuja and of Chaitanya and of Kabir to raise the lower classes of India show that marvellous results were attained during the life-time of those great prophets, and yet the later failures have to be explained, why the effect stopped almost within a century of the passing away of these great masters. The secret is here. They raised the lower classes ; they had all the wish that they should come up, but they did not put their energies to the spread of the Sanskrit language among the masses. Even the great Buddha made one false step in the movement when he stopped the Sanskrit language from being studied by the

Sanskrit as  
well as the  
Vernaculars  
both  
necessary  
for the  
purpose

**Neglect of  
Sanskrit  
is the cause  
of the  
failure of  
reformers  
like  
Buddha.**

masses. He wanted rapid and hurried work and translated and preached in the language of the day, Pali. That was grand, the people understood him. He was speaking in the language of the people and the effect was great ; it spread the ideas quickly and made them reach far and wide, but, along with that, Sanskrit also ought to have gone among them, for though knowledge came, yet the prestige, the culture was not there. It is culture that withstands shocks, not a simple mass of knowledge. You can bring a mass of knowledge into the world, but that will not do it much good. There must come culture into the blood. We all know of nations in modern history that have mastered a great deal of knowledge, but, still, what of them? They are like tigers, they are like savages, because culture is not there. Knowledge with them is only skin-deep, as civilisation is, and a little scratch brings out the old savage. This is the danger. Teach the masses in the vernaculars, give them ideas. They will get information thereby, but something more is necessary ; give them culture. Until you can give them that, there is no permanence of this raised condition of the masses ; there will be only another caste, possessing the advantage of the knowledge of the Sanskrit language, and who with that will quickly rise above the rest, and rule them. The only safety, I tell you, men who belong to the lower castes, the only way to raise your condition is to study the Sanskrit. And this fighting and writing and frothing against the higher castes is vain, for it does no

**Knowledge  
of Sanskrit  
is the only  
way for the  
elevation of  
the masses.**

good and creates fighting and quarrel, and the race, unfortunately already divided, becomes divided more and more thereby. Therefore, the only way to bring about the levelling of caste privileges is to appropriate the culture, the education, which is the strength of the highest castes. That done, you have what you want.

In connection with this I want to discuss one question which has a particular bearing with regard to Madras. There is a theory that there was a race of people in Southern India called the Dravidians entirely differing from another race in Northern India called the Aryans. And that the Southern India Brahmins are the only Aryans that came here from the North. And the rest of Southern India people are of an entirely different race from that of these Brahmins. This theory is entirely unfounded. The only proof that they give for it is that there is a difference of language between the North and the South. There is no other difference. We are so many Northern men here, and I defy the European ethnologists to pick out the Northern from the Southern men of this assembly. Then where is the difference? It is in the language. But they say the Brahmins came here speaking the Sanskrit language. Well then, they took up the Dravidian language and forgot their Sanskrit. Why could not the other castes have done the same? Why can we not say that all the other castes came one after the other from Northern India, forgot their language, and took up the Dravidian? That is an argument working both

Aryans or  
Dravidians  
in Southern  
India?

ways. Do not believe in such things. There may have been a Dravidian people once, who vanished from here, and the few of them who still remain are in the forests and other out of the way places. Quite possible that their language may have been taken up from them, but all the other castes, with the Brahmins here, are all Aryans who came from the North. And the whole of India is Aryan, nothing else.

Sudras are  
not  
aborigines.

Then there is the other idea that the Sudras are surely the aborigines. They must have been slaves at first. They say there is a parallel to this in modern history. The Americans, and English, and Dutch, and Portuguese got hold of the poor Africans in similar fashion. These poor Africans and their children of mixed birth were made slaves by them and kept in that condition long. So from this example, the mind of our ethnologist jumps back several thousand years and concludes that the same thing must have also happened here in India. He dreams that India was full of dark-eyed aborigines before, and the fair Aryans came from the Lord knows where. For according to some of them, they came from Central Thibet, while others will have it that they came from Central Asia. There are patriotic Englishmen who think that the Aryans were all red-haired. Again, if a writer happens to be a black-haired man he thinks that the Aryans were all black. Of late, an attempt was made to prove that the Aryans lived on the Swiss lakes. Some say now that they

Did the  
Aryans  
come from  
outside  
India?

lived at the North Pole even. But there is not one word in our scriptures, not one, to prove that the Aryans ever came from anywhere outside of India, of ancient India, which included Afghanistan within it. The theory that the Sudra castes were all non-Aryans is equally logical and equally irrational. It would not have been possible in those days for a few Aryans to come and settle in India and to live here with a hundred thousand slaves at their back. These slaves would have eaten them up, destroyed them in five minutes. The only explanation for the Sudras is to be found in the Mahabharata. It says that in the beginning of the Satyayuga there was but one caste, the Brahmins only. Then, by difference of occupation, they divided themselves into many castes. That is the only true and rational explanation that has been given. In the coming Satyayuga, all these different castes will be reduced into one as it was in the beginning. The solution of the caste-problem in India, therefore, assumes the form of lower castes rising to the status of the Brahmin and not that of degrading the higher castes or outcrushing the Brahmin. To attain Brahminhood is the ideal of the people of India. This has been wonderfully put forward by Sankaracharya at the beginning of his commentary on the Gita, where he says that the reason why the Lord became incarnated as Sri Krishna is this preserving of Brahminhood. That is the great end. The Brahmin, the ideal man, the man of God, who has become perfect by knowing *Brahman*,

Brahmin  
the only  
one caste  
in the  
beginning.

Solution  
of the  
caste  
problem

by raising  
the lower  
castes to  
the ideal  
of the  
Brahmin.

must remain ; he must not go. And with all the defects of the caste system of the present day, we know that we must all be ready to give to the Brahmin caste this credit, that from it has come more men with that real Brahminness in them than from all the other castes. That is true. That is the credit that must be given to the Brahmin caste by all the other castes. We must be bold, must be brave to speak the defects of the Brahmins, but at the same time give them that which is their due. Therefore, my friends, it is no use fighting among the castes ; what good will it do ? It will divide us all the more, weaken us all the more, degrade us all the more. The days of exclusive privileges and exclusive claims are gone, gone for ever from the soil of India, and it is one of the great blessings of the British Rule of India. Even to the Mahommedan rule we owe a part of that great blessing, destruction of exclusive privilege. That rule was after all not wholly bad, nothing is all bad and nothing is all good. The Mahommedan conquest of India came as a salvation to the down-trodden, to the poor. That is why one-fifth of our people have become Mahommedans. It was not the sword that did it all. It would be the height of madness to think that it was all done by the sword and fire. And one-fifth—nay, one half—of your Madras people will become Christians if you do not take care. Was there ever a sillier thing before the world than what I saw in the Malabar country ? The poor Pariah is not allowed to

pass through the same street as the high-caste man, but if he changes his name to a hodgepodge English or a Mahomedan one, he is all right. What inference would you draw except that these Malabarais are all lunatics, their homes so many lunatic asylums and that they are to be treated with derision by every race in India until they mend their manners and know better. Shame upon them that such wicked and diabolical customs are allowed ; their own brethren they allow to die of starvation, but, as soon as these take up some other religion they treat them better. There ought to be no more fight between the castes. The solution of the caste problem lies not in bringing down the higher, but in raising the lower up to the level of the higher. And that is the line of work that has been laid down in all our books inspite of what you may hear from some people whose knowledge of their own scriptures and capacity to understand the comprehensive and mighty plans of the ancients are absolutely nil. They do not understand, but those do that have brains, that have the intellect to grasp the whole scope of the work and stand aside and trace step by step the wonderful procession of rational life through the ages, from the records kept in their scriptures. And what is the plan? At one end is the ideal, the Brahmin, and at the other end is the lowest representation of humanity the Chandala, and the whole work is to raise the Chandala slowly and granting him more and more privileges until he also becomes a Brahmin. There are books where you



read such fierce sentiments as these : "If the Sudra hears the words of the Vedas, fill his ears with molten lead and if he remembers a line, cut him to pieces. If he says to the Brahmin 'you Brahmin', cut his tongue out." This is diabolical old barbarism no doubt but do not blame the law-givers who simply record the customs of some section of the community. Do not wonder at such exhibition of devilish temper among the old law-givers for there have been such, more or less, in all ages. Accordingly you will find that later this tone is modified a little, as for instance in the passage, "Do not disturb the Sudras but do not teach them higher things." Then gradually we find in other Smritis, especially in those that are in full power now, that if the Sudras imitate the manners and customs of the Brahmins they do well, they ought to be encouraged. Thus it is going on. I have no time to place before you all the steps, or to state how they can be traced in detail. Coming to plain facts, we find that all the castes are to rise slowly, that there are many sub-divisions in each of the four principal castes and that some of these have risen so high as to be very near getting admission into the Brahmin fold. For the laws governing a caste, however rigid they may be, have been created so that they would not prevent its declaring itself to be Brahmin, when the opportune moment has arrived for it. Let us suppose there is a caste with ten thousand people in it. If these unite and say we will call ourselves Brahmins, nothing can

Principles  
of caste  
formation  
in India.

stop them. I have seen such cases in my own experience. Some castes became strong, and as soon as their members agreed, they took up the sacred thread and declared themselves equal to the Brahmins and there was none to say nay. Because, whatever they were, each caste was exclusive of the other. It did not meddle with other's affairs, even the several divisions of one caste did not meddle with the other divisions. And the great Sankaracharya and other epoch-makers were great builders of caste. I cannot tell you all the wonderful things that they did to manufacture castes and some of you might strongly resent what I have to say. But in my travels through India, I have studied and traced facts regarding the formation of caste by them, and most wonderful results I have arrived at. They sometimes got hold of hordes of Beluchis and made them Kshatrias in one minute, hordes of fishermen and made them Brahmins in one minute. These epoch-makers were all Rishis and sages and we have to bow down to their memory. Well, be you all Rishis and sages like them, for that is the ideal. Therefore, attain Rishihood and manifest it as best as you can in your lives. And what is meant by a Rishi? The pure one. Be pure first, and you will have power. Simply saying, "I am a Rishi", will not do, but when you are a Rishi, you will find that others obey you willingly or not. Something mysterious comes out of you which makes people follow you, makes them hear you, makes them unconsciously and even against

The method of caste-building adopted by Sankara and other great reformers.

their will, carry out your plans. That is the test of Rishihood.

The  
Brahmin  
to deserve  
his position  
must  
work for  
the  
elevation  
of the  
other  
castes.

We have not entered into the details in our suggestions towards the solution of the caste problem. Details have to be worked out through generations. What I have told you is just a suggestion to show you that these quarrels are in vain and should cease. Especially do I regret that in modern times there should be so much fight amongst the castes for privileges. This must cease. It is useless on all sides. On the side of the highest caste, the Brahmins, it is more so because the day for these exclusive claims and privileges is gone. The duty of every aristocracy is to raise the lowers to its own state and privileges. The more it delays, the more it will degenerate and the worse death it will die. It is the duty of the Brahmin, therefore, to work for the salvation of the rest of the people of India. If he does that, and so long as he does that, he is a Brahmin, but he is no Brahmin when he uses his privileges for the purpose of making money from the other castes. Again, the people of the other castes ought to help only the real Brahmin. Help to one who deserves it leads to heaven, while helps sometimes given to a person who does not deserve it leads to the other place, says our scripture. So you must be on your guard about whom you help. He only is the real Brahmin who has no secular employment. For secular employment is not for the Brahmin but for the other castes. To the Brahmins I appeal that they must work hard to

raise the Indian people by teaching them what they know, by giving out the culture that they have accumulated amongst them for centuries. It is the paramount duty of the Brahmins of India to remember that they are really Brahmins. Manu says, "All these privileges and honors are given to the Brahmin because with him is the treasury of virtue."\* So they must open that treasury and distribute its contents to the world. It is true that the Brahmin was the earliest teacher to the Indian races, the first to attain to higher realisation of truth before others could reach that. It was not his fault that he marched ahead of the other castes. Why did not the other castes do so? Why did the others first sit down lazy and move with the pace of a tortoise? But here, I must tell the Brahmin also that it is one thing to gain an advantage and another to reserve it for evil use. Whenever power is used for evil it becomes diabolical ; it must be used for good. So this accumulated culture of ages of which the Brahmin has been the trustee, he must now distribute to the people at large. It is because he did not give it to the people at large that India had to open her doors to the Mahomedan invasion. It is because he did not open that treasury to the people from the beginning that for a thousand years we are being trodden under the heels of every one who chose to come into India, and it is through

The non-Brahmin must acquire spirituality and knowl-

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\* ब्राह्मणो वाचमानो हि पुत्रिव्यामविवाशते

श्रौतः सर्वमृशानां चर्यकोपस्य मुमुक्षुः ॥ मनु ।

edge of  
Sanskrit.

that, that we have become degraded. The foremost necessity of the present age is to break open the cells that hide the wonderful treasures which our common ancestors accumulated, to bring them out and give them to everybody—and the Brahmin must do it first. They say in Bengal that if the cobra sucks out its own poison from the wound of one whom it has bitten the patient survives, so the Brahmin must suck out his own poison. To the non-Brahmin castes, I say, wait, be not in a hurry. Do not seize every opportunity of fighting the Brahmin, because I have shown you that you are suffering for your own fault. Who told you to neglect spirituality and Sanskrit learning? What have you been doing all this time? Why have you been indifferent and now fret and fume because somebody else had more brains, more energy, more pluck and go than you ; so instead of wasting your energies in these vain discussions and quarrels in the newspapers, instead of fighting and quarreling in your own home, which is sinful, use all your energies in acquiring the culture which the Brahmin has, and you will gain your end. Why do you not become Sanskrit scholars? Why do you not spend millions to bring Sanskrit education among you all? The moment you do that you are equal to the Brahmin. Sanskrit is the secret of power in India, for Sanskrit and prestige go together. As soon as you have Sanskrit education none dares say anything against you. That is the secret ; take that up. The whole

universe, to use the ancient Advaitist simile, is in a state of self-hypnotism. It is the will that is the power. It is the man of strong will that throws a halo round him and brings all the other people to the same state of vibration that he has in his own mind. Men with such gigantic will power appear, and as soon as one such is born amidst us, the majority of us begin to think the same thought with him and thus we become powerful. To take a case in hand—forty millions of Englishmen rule three hundred millions of people here, how is it? You say organisation is material. But what is the psychological explanation? These forty millions can put their wills together and that means infinite power, and you three-hundred millions are each separate from the other. Therefore, to make a great India in the future, the whole secret lies in just that one thing, organisation, accumulation, co-ordination of all powers, of all wills. Already, before my mind rises one of the marvellous verses of the *Atharvana Veda Samhita* which says, “Be you all of one mind, be you all of one thought, for in the days of yore, the gods being of one mind, were enabled to receive oblations.”\* The gods succeeded in getting worship from men because they were of one mind, and that is the secret of society. And the more you fight and quarrel about trivialities such as, “Dravidian” and “Aryan,” “Brahmins” and

Organisation  
of will-power  
—the secret  
of making  
India great  
in future.

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\* “संगच्छन्तं संवदन्तं सं वी जगसि जगतां  
देवा भारं यथा पूषे ॥” —अथर्ववेदसंहिता।

Focus all  
will-power  
towards one  
ideal.

"Non-Brahmins," the farther you stand from that accumulation of energy and power which is to make the future India. For, mark you, the India of the future depends entirely upon that. This is the secret, the accumulation of the will-powers, the co-ordination, the bringing them all, as it were, into one focus. Each Chinaman thinks his own way and a handful of Japanese think all in the same way and you know the result. That is how it goes throughout the history of the world. You find compact little nations always ruling huge unwieldy nations, and it is natural, because it is easier for the little compact nations to bring their ideas into one focus and develop quickly. And the bigger the nation, the more unwieldy it is. The people of such a nation are born, as it were, a disorganised mob, they cannot combine. So cease to quarrel.

Give up  
jealousy.

There is yet another defect in us. Ladies, excuse me, through centuries of slavery we have become like women. You scarcely can get three women together in this country or any country in the world for five minutes, but they quarrel. They make big societies in European countries, and make tremendous declarations of women's power and so on and then these ladies quarrel among themselves, and some man comes and rules them all. They still require some man to rule over them yet, all over the world. We are like these women, I tell you about. If a woman comes to lead women they all begin immediately to criticise her, tear her to pieces and

make her sit down. If a man comes, and gives them a little harsh treatment, scolds them now and then, it is all right, they have been used to that sort of mesmerism. The whole world is rife with such mesmerism. We are like that. In the same way if one of your countrymen stands up and tries to become great, you all try to put him down, but if a foreigner comes and tries to kick you, it is all right. You have been used to that mesmerism. Shake off this slavery and be you your own master. Let the great mother who is manifest before you as your own nation be the sole object of your worship for the coming fifty years. And let all other vain gods disappear. All other gods are sleeping while she alone is awake, she who is before you as your own people, whose hands and feet and ears are everywhere in the land, covering everything. What vain gods will you go after and not worship the living God that you see all around you, the *Virat*? When you have worshipped that you will be able to worship all other gods. For otherwise it is like trying to cross the ocean, like Hanuman, when you cannot crawl half a mile before you. It cannot be. Every one of you going to be a *Yogi*, everyone going to meditate! It cannot be. You cannot become that by sitting down for a little while once in the evening and blowing through your nose while you are in mad pursuit of worldly things all the live-long day. Is it so easy? Should Rishis come flying through the air because you have blown three times through the nose? Is it a joke? It is all nonsense. What is needed is

The worship of the *Virat* in your own nation is the greatest of all worship now.



*Chittasuddhi*, purification of the heart. And how does that come? First of all by the worship of the *Virat* in those all around us. Worship it, not serve or help, no other English word will do: Worship is the exact equivalent of the Sanskrit word. Let these be your gods now, your fellow-countrymen. So worship them, instead of being jealous of them or fighting with them. Jealousy is the most terrible sin which is upon you, for which you are suffering, and yet you will not open your eyes.

My plan is to stop, I must bring my lecture to a close by only placing before you in a few words the plans I want to carry out in Madras. We must have a hold on the spiritual and secular education of the nation. Until you get that there is no salvation for the race. Do you realise that? you must dream of it, you must talk of it, you must think of it, and you must work for it incessantly. The education that you are getting now has some good points, but it has a tremendous disadvantage and this disadvantage is so great that the good things are all weighed down by it. In the first place it is not a man-making education, it is merely and entirely a negative education. An education that is based on negation is worse than death. The child is taken to school and the first thing he learns is that his father is a fool, the second, that his grand-father is a crazy lunatic, the third, that all his teachers are hypocrites; the fourth, that all his sacred books are lies! By the time he is sixteen, he is a mass of nega-

Education  
should be in  
our control.

Evils of the  
present  
Education.

tion, lifeless and boneless. And the result is that fifty years of such education has not produced one man in the three Presidencies. Every man of worth or originality that has been produced has been educated elsewhere, or has gone to the old university ideals of the country once more, to cleanse himself of things learnt from this so-called education. Education is not the amount of information that is put into your brain and that runs riot there, undigested, all your life. We must have life-building, man-making, character-making assimilation of ideas. If you have assimilated five ideas and made them practical in your life and character, you have more education than any man who can reproduce from his memory a whole library, like, "The ass carrying its load of sandalwood knowing only the weight and not the value of the sandalwood upon his back."\* If education is identical with information, the libraries are the greatest sages in the world, and encyclopædias, Rishis. The ideal, therefore, is that we must have the whole education of our country, spiritual and secular, in our own hands, and it must be on national lines through national methods, as far as practicable. Of course this is a very big order, a big plan. I do not know whether it will ever work itself out. But we must begin the work. How? For instance, take Madras. We must have a temple there; for, with Hindus, religion must come first.

Education must be conducted on national non-sectarian lines.

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\* "यथा खरचन्दन भारवाही

भारव्य वेत्ता ननु चन्दनस्य ॥"

Then, you say, all sects will quarrel about the temple. We will make a non-sectarian temple, giving only *Om*\* as the symbol, the greatest symbol of all sect for if there be any sect here which has not the belief in *Om* as the highest symbol, it has no right to go by the Hindu name. So we must have a common temple in which all will have the right to interpret the scriptures, each one according to his own sect ideas. You can each have your own images and symbols in other places, but must not quarrel here with the others who differ from you. Here will be taught the common grounds of our different sects, and at the same time the different sects will have perfect liberty to come here and teach their doctrines, only with one restriction, no quarrel with other sects. Say what you have to say, the world wants it, but the world has no time to hear what you think about other people, keep that to yourselves. Secondly, along with this temple there will be an institution to train teachers and preachers. These teachers must go about preaching religion and giving secular education to our people; they must henceforth carry both, as the Sannyasis have already been carrying religion from door to door. So let them along with it carry secular education from door to door as well. That can be easily done. Then the work will extend through these bands of teachers and preachers and gradually

Preachers  
should  
combine  
secular and  
religious  
instruction.

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\* *Om*—A generic word for Brahman, signifying the Absolute whole, in all its three aspects, namely, creation, preservation and destruction, the Hindu Triad of the godhead.

we shall have similar temples in other places until we have covered the whole of India. That is the plan. It may appear gigantic. But it is needed. You may ask where is the money for it. Money is not needed. Money is nothing. For the last twelve years of my life I did not know where the next meal would come from, but money and everything I wanted came because these were my slaves and not I theirs. So money and everything else must come—must, that is the word. But where are the men? That is the question. I have told you what we have become. Where are the men? Young men of Madras, my hope is in you. Do you respond to the call of your nation? Each one of you has a glorious future, if you dare believe me. Have tremendous faith in yourselves, which I had when I was a child and I am working that out. Have that faith, each one, in yourself, the faith that that eternal power is lodged in everyone. Then only can you revive the whole of India. Aye, resolve that we will go to every country under the sun, and our ideas, must be, within the next ten years, a component part of the many forces that are working to make up every nation in the world. We must enter into the life of every nation in the world. We must enter into the life of every race, inside India and outside India, and so will we work. That is how it should be. I want young men. Say the Vedas, “It is the strong, the healthy, the keenly intellectual, the young, that will reach the Lord.”\* This is the time to decide your

Men are  
wanted to  
carry this  
out.

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\* “बाब्रिडी बबिडी द्रिडिडी मेवावी”

future when you have the freshness, the vigour and the energy of youth in you, when you are not worked out or jaded. Work ; this is the time ; for the freshest, the most untouched, and unsmelled flowers alone are to be laid at the feet of the Lord. He receives such alone. Get up, therefore, greater works are to be done than picking up quarrels, and becoming lawyers, and such things. A far greater work is this sacrifice of yourselves for the benefit of your race for the welfare of humanity. What is in this life ? You are Hindus, and there is the instinctive belief in you that life is eternal. Sometimes I have young men in Madras coming and talking to me about Atheism, I do not believe a Hindu can become an Atheist. He may read European books, and persuade himself that he is a materialist but that only for five months, mark you. It is not in his blood. You cannot believe what is not in your constitution ; it would be a hopeless task for you. Do not attempt that sort of thing. I once attempted it when I was a boy ; but it could not be. Life is short, but the soul is immortal and eternal, and therefore, one thing being certain, death, let us take up a great ideal, and give up our whole life to it. Let this be our determination, and may He, the Lord, "Who comes again and again for the salvation of His own people," the great Krishna, bless us and lead us all to the fulfilment of our aims !

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## REMARKS ON 'CHARITY': EAST AND WEST.

During his stay in Madras the Swami presided at the annual meeting of the Chennapuri Annadana Samajam, an institution of a charitable nature. In the course of a brief address he referred to the remark of a previous speaker deprecating special alms-giving to the Brahmin over and above the other castes. He pointed out that, this had its good as well as its bad side. For all the culture practically, which the nation possessed, was among the Brahmins, and they also had been the thinkers of the nation. If the means of living which enabled them to be thinkers were taken away the nation as a whole would suffer. Speaking of the indiscriminate charity of India as compared with the legal charity of Western nations, he said, that the outcome of their systems of relief was that the vagabond in India was contented to receive readily what he was given readily and lived a peaceful and contented life while the vagabond in the West, unwilling to go to the poor-houses,—for man loves liberty more than food—turned into a robber, an enemy of society, and necessitated the organisation of a system of magistracy, police, jails and manifold botheration of that sort. Poverty there must be, so long as the disease known as civilisation existed : and hence the need for relief will also remain. So that they had to choose between two sorts of charities—

the indiscriminate charity of India, which, in the case of Sannyasins at any rate, even if they were not sincere men, at least forced them to learn some little of their scriptures before they were able to obtain food and the discriminate charity of Western nations, which necessitated a costly system of poor-law relief and in the end succeeded only in changing mendicants into criminals.

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## THE TASK BEFORE THE YOUTH OF BENGAL

(REPLY TO CALCUTTA ADDRESS OF WELCOME.)

One wants to lose the individual in the universal, one renounces and tries to cut himself off from all associations of the body, and of the past ; one works hard to forget even that he is a man ; yet, in the heart of his heart, there is a soft sound, one string vibrating, one whisper, which tells him, East or West, home is best. Citizens of the capital of this Empire, before you I stand, not as a *Sannyásin*, no, not even as a preacher, but I come before you, the same Calcutta boy, to talk to you as I used to do. Aye, I would like to sit upon the dust of the streets of this city, and, with the freedom of childhood, talk to you my mind, my brothers. Accept, therefore, my heart-felt thanks for this unique word that you have used, "Brother." Yes ; I am your brother, and you are my brothers. I was asked by an English friend on the eve of my departure, "Swami, how do you like now your motherland after four years' experience of the luxurious, glorious, powerful West?" I could only answer, "India I loved before I came away. Now the very dust of India has become holy to me, the very air is now to me holy, it is now the holy land, the place of pilgrimage, the *Tirtha*." Citizens of Calcutta—my brothers—I cannot express my grati-

Swami's love  
for India  
and the city  
of his birth.



His opinion  
on the Parlia-  
ment of  
Religions.

tude to you for the kindness you have shown, or rather I should not thank you at all, for you are my brothers, you have done only a brother's duty, aye, only a Hindu brother's duty, for such family ties, such relationships, such love, exist nowhere beyond the bounds of this motherland of ours. The Parliament of Religions was a great affair, no doubt. We have thanked the gentlemen who organised the meeting, from various cities of this land, and they deserved all our thanks for the kindness that they showed to us, but yet allow me to construe for you the history of the Parliament of Religions. They wanted a horse and they wanted to ride it. There were people there who wanted to make it a heathen show, but it was ordained otherwise ; it could not help being so. Most of them were kind and we have thanked them enough for that.

On the  
Americans.

On the other hand, my mission in America was not for the Parliament of Religions. That was only something by the way, it was only an opening, an opportunity, and of course, for that, we are very thankful to the members who got up the Parliament, but really our thanks are due to the great people of the United States, the American nation, the warm-hearted, hospitable, great nation of America, where more than anywhere else the feeling of brotherhood has been developed. An American meets you for five minutes on board a train, and you are his friend, and the next moment he invites you as a guest to his home and opens the secret of his home-life to you.

That is the American nation, and we cannot be thankful enough to them. Their kindness to me is past all narration ; it would take me years yet to tell you how I have been treated by them, most kindly and most wonderfully. So are our thanks due to the other nation on the other side of the Atlantic. No one ever landed on English soil with more hatred in his heart for the English nation than I did, and, on this platform are present English friends who can bear witness to the fact, but the more I lived among them, mixed with them, saw how the machine of English national life was working, found where the heart-beat of the nation was, the more I loved them. And there is none among you here present, my brothers, who loves the English people more than I do now. You have to see what is going on there and mix with them for a better understanding of them. As our national philosophy, the Vedánta, has traced all misfortune, all misery to that one cause, ignorance, so here the difficulties that arise between us and the English people are mostly due to ignorance. We do not know them, they do not know us. Unfortunately, to the Western mind, spirituality, nay, even morality, is eternally connected with worldly prosperity, and as soon as an Englishman or any other man of the West lands on our soil and finds it to be a land of poverty and misery, he forthwith concludes that there cannot be any religion here, nor any morality even. His own experience is true. In Europe, owing to its cold climate and many other circumstances, poverty and

On the  
English.

In the West,  
poverty and  
sin go  
together.

**In the East  
poverty  
exalts the  
man.**

sin go together, but not in India. In India, on the other hand, my experience is, the poorer the man the better off he is in morality. Now this takes time to understand, and how many foreign people are there who will stop to understand this very secret of national existence in India? Few are there who will have the patience to study the nation and understand. Here and here alone is the only nation to whom poverty does not mean crime, poverty does not mean sin, and here is the only nation where not only poverty does not mean crime, but poverty has been deified, so that the beggar's garb is the highest garb in the land. On the other hand, we have also similarly to study patiently the social institutions of the West, before rushing into mad judgment about them. Their intermingling of sexes, their different customs and manners, have all their meaning, have all their grand sides, if you have the patience to study them. Not that I mean that we are going to borrow their manners and customs, not that they are going to borrow ours, for the manners and customs of each race are the product of centuries of patient growth of that race and each one has a deep meaning behind it; and therefore neither are they to ridicule our manners and customs, nor we theirs.

**Similarly all  
Western  
institutions  
have good  
and bad  
sides.**

**Work in  
America and  
in England  
compared.**

Again, I want to make another statement before this assembly. My work in England has been more satisfactory to me than my work in America. That bold, brave and steady Englishman, and if I may use the expression, with his skull a little thicker than

those of other people—if he has once an idea hammered into his brain, it never comes out, the immense practicality and energy of the race makes it sprout up and immediately bear fruit. Not so in any other country. That immense practicality, that immense vitality of the race you do not see anywhere else. They seem to have less of imagination and more of work, but who knows the mainspring of the English heart and of how much of imagination and of feeling is there? They are a nation of heroes, they are the true Kshatriyas, and their education has been to hide their feelings and never to show them. From their childhood they have been educated up to that. Seldom will you find an Englishman manifesting feeling, nay, even an English woman. I have seen English women go to work and do deeds which would stagger the bravest of Bengalees to do. And beneath this superstructure, this outer covering of the fighter, there is a deep spring of feeling in the English heart. If you once know how to reach it, if you are there, and if you have personal contact, and mixing with him know how to open his heart, he is your friend for ever, he is your servant. Therefore in my opinion, my work in England has been more satisfactory than anywhere else. I firmly believe that if I should die to-morrow the work in England would not die, but would go on expanding all the time.

Gentlemen, you have touched another chord in my heart, the deepest of all, and that by the mention of my teacher, my master, my hero, my ideal, my

The Swami's  
Master.

God in life—Sri Rámakrishna Paramahansa. If there has been anything achieved by me, by thought or word, or deed, if from my lips ever has fallen one word that has helped any one in the world, I lay no claim to it, it was his. But if there have been curses falling from my lips, if there has been hatred coming out of me, it is all mine, and not his. All that has been weak has been mine, and all that has been life-giving, strengthening, pure, and holy, has been his inspiration, his words, and he himself. Yes, my friends, the world has yet to know that man. We read in the history of the world of great prophets of yore. The accounts of their lives have come down to us through centuries of smoothening and plastering by their disciples. And yet, in my opinion, not one stands as high in brilliance as the life of Rámakrishna Paramahansa, he whom I have seen with my own eyes, under whose shadow I have lived, at whose feet I have learnt everything. Aye, friends, you all know the celebrated saying of the Gitá, where the Lord says—"Whenever, O descendant of Bharata, there is a decline of Dharma, and rise of Adharma, then I body myself forth. For the protection of the good, for the destruction of the wicked, and for the establishment of Dharma, I come into being in every age."

Along with which you have to understand that it is just such a thing as stands before us to-day. Before one of these tidal waves comes, there begins to form little whirlpools of spiritual manifestation all over society. One of these then heaves up, and although at

Wonderful  
manifesta-  
tion of  
Divine  
power in  
him.

first unknown, unperceived and unthought of, assumes huge proportions, swallows and assimilates those other little whirlpools, and becoming an immense tidal wave, fall upon society with a power which none can resist. Such is happening to-day. If you have eyes you can see it. If your heart is open you will receive it. If you are truth-seekers you will find it. Blind, blind indeed is the man who does not see the signs of the day. Aye, this boy born of poor Brahmin parents in an out of the way village, of which very few of you have even heard, is literally being worshipped in lands which have been fulminating against 'heathen worship' for centuries. Whose power is it? Is it mine, or yours? It is none else than the power which was manifested here as Rámakrishna Paramahansa. For, you and I, and sages and prophets, nay, even incarnations, the whole universe, are but manifestations of power more or less individualised, more or less concentrated. Here has been a manifestation of an immense power, just the very beginnings of whose workings we are seeing, and before this generation passes away, you will see more wonderful working of that power. It has come just in time for the regeneration of India, for we forget from time to time the vital-power that must always work in India.

Each nation has its own peculiar method of work. Some work through politics, some through social reforms, some through other lines. With us religion is the only ground through which we can move. The Englishman can understand religion through

He came  
when our  
religion  
was in  
danger.

politics. Perhaps, the American can understand it through social reforms. But the Hindu can understand politics even, when it is given through religion : sociology must come through religion, everything must come through religion. For, with him, that is the principal theme, the rest are but variations in the national life-music. And that was in danger. It seemed that we were going to change this theme in our national life, that we were going to exchange the backbone of our existence, that we were trying to replace a spiritual by a political back-bone. And if we could have succeeded, the result would have been annihilation. But it was not to be. So this power became manifest. I do not care in what light you understand this great sage, it matters not how much respect you pay to him, but I challenge you face to face with the fact that here is a manifestation of the most marvellous power that we have had for several centuries in India, and it is your duty, as Hindus, to study this power, to find what has been done for the regeneration, for the good of India and for the good of the whole human race through it. Aye, long before ideas of universal religion and brotherly feeling between different sects had been mooted and discussed in any country in the world, here, in sight of this city, was living a man whose very life was a Parliament of Religions as it should be.

**He is the  
great spiri-  
tual hero of  
the age.**

Gentlemen, the highest ideal in our book is the Impersonal, and would to God everyone of us here were high developed enough to realise that Impersonal

ideal. But, as that cannot be, it is absolutely necessary for the vast majority of us, common human beings, to have personal ideals. And no nation, can rise, can become great, can work at all, without enthusiastically coming round one such great great ideal in life. Political ideals, and personages representing them, even social or commercial ideals, would have no power in India. We want spiritual ideals before us, we want enthusiastically to gather round grand spiritual names. Our heroes must be spiritual. Such a hero has been given unto us in the person of Rámakrishna Paramahamsa. If this nation wants to rise, take my word, it will have to come enthusiastically round this name. It does not matter who preaches Rámakrishna Paramahamsa, whether I, or you, or anybody. But him I place before you, and it is for you to determine presently for the good of our nation what you shall do with this great ideal of life. One thing we are to remember, that it is the purest of all lives that you have ever seen, or let me tell you distinctly, that you have ever read of. And it is a fact before you that this life embodies the most marvellous manifestation of soul-power that you can ever conceive of, much less expect to see. Within ten years of his passing away this power has encircled the globe ; that you know already. Gentlemen, in duty bound therefore, for the good of our race, for the good of our religion, I place this great spiritual ideal before you. Judge him not through me. I am only a weak instrument. Let not his



character be judged by seeing me. It was so great that I, or anyone of his disciples, could not do justice to a millionth part of it even if we spent hundreds of lives. Judge for yourselves ; in the heart of your hearts is the Eternal Witness ; and may He, the same Rámakrishna Paramahansa, for the good of our nation, for the welfare of our country, and for the good of humanity, open your hearts, make you true and steady to work for the immense change which must come over the country, whether we work or not. For the work of the Lord does not wait for the likes of you or me. He can raise his workers from the dust by hundreds and thousands. It is a glory and a privilege that we are allowed to work at all under Him.

**We must go out to conquer the world and expand.**

We come next, to the idea of our necessity for expansion. As you have pointed out to me, we have to conquer the world. That we have ! India must conquer the world, and nothing less than that is my ideal. It may be very big, it may astonish many of you, but it is so. We must conquer the world or die. There is no other alternative. The sign of life is expansion ; we must go out, expand, show life, or degrade, fester and die. There is no other alternative. Take either of these, either live or die. Now, we all know about the petty jealousies and quarrels that we have in our country. Take my word, it is the same everywhere. The other nations with their lives centred in politics, have foreign policies. When they find too much quarrelling at home, they look

for somebody abroad to quarrel with, and the quarrel at home stops. We have these quarrels, but nothing in the shape of a foreign policy to stop them. So let this be our eternal foreign policy, preaching the truths of our *Sāstras* to the nations of the world. Do you, who are politically minded require any proof that this will unite us as a nation? This very assembly is sufficient to provide you with one such. But the unselfish, the noble, the living examples behind us, kept themselves apart from such selfish considerations. One of the great causes of India's misery and downfall has been that she narrowed herself, went into her shell, as the oyster does, and refused to give her jewels and her treasures to other races of mankind, refused to give the life-giving truths to thirsting nations outside the Aryan fold. That has been the one great cause of our fall, that we did not go out, that we did not compare notes with other nations. That has been the one great cause of our downfall, and even you know that the little stir, the little life that you see in India at present, begins from the day when Raja Rammohan Roy broke through the walls of such exclusiveness. Since that day, history in India has taken another turn, and now that life is growing with accelerated motion. If we have had little flood-rivulets of it in the past, deluges are coming, and none can resist them. Therefore we must go out, for the secret of life is to give and to take. Are we to take always? Are we to sit at the feet of the Westerns and learn everything, even religion?

Our foreign policy must be to preach the Vedanta by breaking exclusiveness.

Modern India begins with Ram Mohan Roy.

What we  
have to give  
to the world.

We can learn machines from them. We can learn many other things like that, from them. But we have to teach them something and that is our religion, our spirituality. To complete its civilisation, the world is waiting for the marvellous spiritual treasures which the Indian nation has still kept clutched unto her breast, through decades of degradation and misery. Aye, the world is waiting for that treasure. And little do you know how much of hunger and of thirst there is, outside of India, for these wonderful treasures which you have inherited from your forefathers. We quarrel with each other, laugh at and ridicule everything sacred, till it has become almost a national vice to ridicule everything holy. But little do we understand the heart pangs of millions waiting outside our walls, stretching forth their hands for a little of that spirituality which our forefathers have preserved for us in India. Therefore we must go out and exchange our spirituality for anything they have to give us ; for the marvels of the region of spirit we will exchange the marvels of the region of matter. We must not be students always, but teachers also, for there cannot be friendship without equality, and there cannot be equality when one party is always the teacher and the other party sits always at his feet. If you want to become equal with the Englishman or the American, you will have to teach as well as to learn, and you have plenty yet to teach to the world for centuries to come. This has to be done. Fire and enthusiasm must be in

our blood. We Bengalees have been credited with imagination, and I believe in it. We have been ridiculed as an imaginative race, as men with a good deal of feeling. Let me tell you, my friends, intellect is great indeed but it stops within a certain bound. It is through the heart, and the heart alone, that inspiration comes. It is through the feelings that the highest secrets are reached, and therefore, it is the Bengalee, the man of feeling, that has to do this work more than any one else.

To be equal with the West we must teach as well as learn. The Bengalee, the man of feeling is well fitted for this.

"Awake, arise and stop not till the desired end is reached."\* Young men of Calcutta, arise, awake, for the time is propitious. Already everything is opening out before us. Be hold and fear not. It is only in our scriptures that this adjective is given unto the Lord—*Abhiih*, *Abhiih*. We have to become *Abhiih*, fearless, and our task will be done. Arise, awake, for your country needs tremendous sacrifice. It is the young men that will do it. "The young, the energetic, the strong, the well-built, the intellectual," for them is the task. And we have hundreds and thousands of such young men in Calcutta. If, as you say, I have done something, remember that I was that good-for-nothing boy playing in the streets of Calcutta. If I have done so much how much more will you do! Arise and awake, the world is calling upon you. In other parts of India, there is intellect, there is money, but enthusiasm is only in Bengal.

Be fearless.

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\* "उत्तिष्ठत आगत प्राप्य वरान्निवीधत ॥"

Have  
faith like  
Nachiketa.

That enthusiasm must come out. Therefore, arise young men of Calcutta, with enthusiasm in your blood. Think not that you are poor, that you have no friends. Aye, who has ever seen money make man ; it is man that always makes money. The whole world has been made by the energy of man, by the power of enthusiasm, by the power of faith. Those of you who have studied that most beautiful of all Upanishads, the *Katha*, remember how the king when celebrating a sacrifice, instead of giving away cows of real worth, gave cows that were old and infirm to the Brahmins ; and the book says, how on seeing that the "*Sraddhá* entered into the heart of his son Nachiketa". I would not translate this word *Sraddhá* to you, it would be a mistake. Its real import is wonderful and much depends on understanding the same. So let us see how it works in the case of Nachiketa. *Sraddha* entered into his heart and immediately we find Nachiketa telling unto himself, "I am superior to many, I am inferior to few, I can also do something." He thought he would remind his father that such gifts as his would not lead him to heaven. And the boy told it boldly to his father. This boldness increased and the boy wanted to solve the problem which was in his mind, the problem of death. The solution could only be got by going to the house of Death, and the boy went even there. There he was, brave Nachiketa, waiting at the house of Death for three days and you know how he got what he wanted. What

we want now is this *sraddhá*. Unfortunately, it has nearly vanished from India, and that is why we are in our present state. What makes the difference between man and man is the difference in this *sraddhá*, and nothing else. What makes one man great and another weak and low is this *sraddhá*. My master used to say, he who thinks himself weak shall become weak, and that is true. This *sraddhá* must enter into you. Whatever of material power you see manifested by the Western races is the outcome of this *sraddhá*. This has made them to believe in their power to work in the material plane and you see the result, and if you are made to believe by it in your power to work in the spiritual plane, how much more will you work. So believe in that Infinite Soul, and the infinite power in it, which with consensus of opinion, your books and sages preach. Believe in that *Atman* within you, whom nothing can destroy and in whom is Infinite Power waiting only to be called out. And herein is the great difference between all other philosophies and Indian Philosophy. Whether Dualistic, qualified Monistic, or Monistic, all our schools firmly believe that infinite power is in the soul; it has only to come out and manifest itself. Therefore, this *sraddhá* is what I want, and what all of us here want, this faith in ourselves, and before you is the great task to get that faith. Give up the awful disease that is creeping into our national blood, that idea of ridiculing everything, that loss of seriousness. Give that up. Be strong and have this *sraddhá*, and

Believe in  
the infinite  
power of the  
*Atman*.

everything else is bound to follow. I have done as yet nothing ; you have to do the task. If I die to-morrow the work will not die. I sincerely believe that there will be thousands coming up from your ranks to take up the work and carry it further and further, beyond all my most hopeful imagination ever painted. I have faith in my country, and especially in the youth of my country. The youth of Bengal have the greatest of all tasks that has ever been placed on the shoulders of young men. I have travelled for the last ten years or so over the whole of India and my conviction is that from the youth of Bengal will come the power which will raise India once more to her proper spiritual place. Aye, from the youth of Bengal, with this immense amount of feeling and enthusiasm in their blood, will come those heroes, who will march from one to the other corner of this earth, travel from pole to pole, preaching and teaching the eternal spiritual truths of our forefathers. And this is the great work before you. Therefore, let me conclude, once more reminding you to "Arise, awake, and stop not till the desired end is reached." Be not afraid, for all great power, throughout the history of humanity, has been with the people. From out of their ranks have come all the greatest geniuses of the world. And history can only repeat itself. Be not afraid of anything. You will do marvellous work. The moment you fear you are nobody. It is fear that is the great cause of misery in the world. It is fear that is the greatest of all superstitions. It is fear

that is the cause of our woes, and it is fearlessness that brings even heaven in a moment. Therefore, "Arise, awake, and stop not till the desired goal is reached."

Gentlemen, allow me to thank you once more for all the kindness that I have received at your hands. I can only tell you that it is my wish—my intense, sincere wish—to be even of the least service to the world, and above all, to my own country and my countrymen.

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## THE VEDANTA IN ALL ITS PHASES.

DELIVERED AT CALCUTTA.

**The  
Vedanta,  
eternal and  
not created.**

Away back where no recorded history, nay, not even the dim light of tradition can penetrate, has been steadily shining, the light, sometimes effulgent and at other times dimmed by external circumstances, but undying and steady, shedding its rays not only over India, but permeating the whole thought-world with its power, silent, unperceived, gentle, yet omnipotent, like the dew that falls in the morning, unseen and unnoticed and yet brings into bloom the fairest of roses—the thought of the Upanishads, the philosophy of the Vedānta. Nobody knows when it first came to flourish on the soil of India. Guess-works have been vain. The guesses, especially of Western writers, have been so conflicting that no certain date can be ascribed to them. But we Hindus, from the spiritual standpoint, do not admit that they had any origin. This Vedānta, the philosophy of the Upanishads, I would make bold to state, has been the first as well as the final thought that on the spiritual plane has ever been vouchsafed to man. From this ocean of light, the Vedanta has been going on in waves, Westward and Eastward, from time to time. In the days of yore it travelled Westward and gave its impetus to the mind of the Greeks, in Athens, in Alexandria, and Antioch. The Sāṅkhya System

**It is the  
basis of all  
the  
systems of  
philosophy  
of the  
world.**

must clearly have made its mark on the minds of the ancient Greeks. And the Sāṅkhya and all other systems of thoughts in India that have produced the jarring sects that we see to-day and all those that were in the past, have for their basis, their authority, the Upanishads, the Vedānta. Whether you are a Dualist, or a qualified Monist, or a Monist, whatever you may call yourself, a Dualist, a Visishtādvaitist, a Visuddhādvaitist, or any Advaitist, there stands behind you as your authority, your *Sāstras*, the Upanishads. Whatever system in India does not obey the Upanishads cannot be called orthodox ; the systems of the Jains and the Buddhists are not regarded as orthodox only because they do not bear allegiance to them. Thus the Vedānta, whether we know it or not, has been the sole fountain-head which has produced all the sects in India ; and what we call Hinduism, this mighty Banyan tree with its immense and almost infinite ramifications, has been interpenetrated through and through by the influence of the Vedānta. Whether we are conscious of it or not, we think on the line of the Vedānta, we breathe the Vedānta, and we live and die in the Vedānta. Aye, every Hindu does that. To preach Vedānta in the land of India, and before an Indian audience, seems, therefore, to be an anomaly. But it is the one thing that has got to be preached, and it is the necessity of the age that it should be preached, for though there are many apparent contradictions among the present sects in India they must all bear allegiance to the Upanishads.

Hinduism  
is nothing  
but Ve-  
danta.

The under-  
lying har-  
mony of  
the Upa-  
nishads.

The sages of yore, quarrelled many a time amongst themselves not understanding the underlying harmony of the Upanishads and that so much so that it became a proverb that there are "no sages who do not differ."\* But the time requires that a better interpretation should be given to the Upanishadic texts, showing the underlying harmony in the dualistic, non-dualistic, quasi-dualistic passages in them. And that has to be preached before the world at large. That work requires to be done as much in India as outside of India. And I, through the grace of God, had the great good fortune to sit at the feet of one whose whole life itself was such an interpretation, whose life, a thousand-fold more than whose teaching, was a living commentary on the texts of the Upanishads, and who was in fact, the spirit of the Upanishads living in a human form. Perhaps I have got a little bit of that harmony from him. I do not know whether I shall be able to express it or not, but my mission in life is to attempt to show that Vedāntic Schools are not contradictory, that they all necessitate each other, all fulfil each other, and form, as it were, the different steps of the ladder to reach the goal, the Advaita, the *Tattwam asi*. There was a time in India when the *Karma-kānda* had its sway. There are many grand ideals, no doubt, in that portion of the Vedas. Some of our present daily worship are still performed according to the pre-

cepts of the *Karma-kánda* of it. But, with all that, the *Karma-kánda* of the Vedas has almost disappeared from India. Very little of our life at the present day is bound and regulated by the injunctions of the *Karma-kánda* of the Vedas. In our ordinary lives we are mostly Pauránics or Tántrics, and, even where some Vedic texts are used by the Brahmins of India, the adjustment of them is mostly not according to the Vedas but according to the Tantrás or the Puránas. As such to call ourselves Vaidics in the sense of following the *Karma-kánda* of the Vedas, I do not think, would be proper. But the other fact stands, that we are all of us Vedántists. The people who call themselves Hindus had better be called Vedántists, and, as I have shown you, under that one name Vaidántikas, come in all our various sects, either dualists or non-dualists.

The Hindus  
are all  
Vedantists.

The sects that are there present in India can generally be divided into the two classes, the dualists and the monists. The little differences which some of these sects insist upon, and on the ground of which they want to take new names, such as Vishuddhadvaitists or pure Advaitists, or Vishistadvaitists or qualified Advaitists, and so forth, do not matter much. Some of these are very new, and others seem to be reproductions of very ancient sects, but all of them can be classified either as dualists or monists. The former class I would represent by the life and philosophy of Rámánuja, and the latter by Sankarácharya. Rámánuja was the leading dualistic

Two chief  
sects of  
Hindus,  
monists and  
dualists.

Ramanuja  
and  
Dualism.

philosopher of later India. All the other dualistic sects have followed him, directly or indirectly—both in the substance of their teaching and in the organisations of their sects, even down to some of the most minute points of their organisation. You will be astonished, to find, if you compare Rámánuja and his works with the other dualistic, Vaishnavist sects in India, how much they resemble each other in organisation, teaching and method. There is the great Southern preacher Madhva Muni, and following him our great Chaitanya of Bengal, who took up the philosophy of the Madhvas and preached it in Bengal. There are some other sects in Southern India also, who are qualified-dualistic Saivites. The Saivites of India are mostly Advaitists, except those that live in some portions of Southern India and in Ceylon. But they also only substitute Siva for Vishnu and are Rámánujists in every sense of the term except in the doctrine of the soul. The followers of Rámánuja hold that the soul is *Anu*, like a particle, very small, and the followers of Sankarácharya hold that it is *Vibhu*, omnipresent. There have been many non-dualistic sects in ancient times in India but it seems that Sankara's movement has entirely swallowed up and assimilated them. You find sometimes a fling at Sankara himself in some of the commentaries, especially in that of Vignána Bhikshu, who, though an Advaitist, attempts to upset the *Máyáváda* of Sankara. It seems there were schools that did not believe in this *Máyáváda*, and they went so far as

Sankara  
and  
Advaitism.

to call Sankara a crypto-Buddhist, *Prachchanna Baud-dha*, and they thought this *Máyávéda* was taken from the Buddhist and brought within the Vedántic fold by him. However that may be, in modern times the Advaitists have all ranged themselves under Sankaráchárya ; and Sankaráchárya and his disciples have been the great preachers of Advaita, both in Southern and in Northern India. The influence of Sankaráchárya did not penetrate much into our country in Bengal or in Cashmere or in the Punjab, but in Southern India the Smártas are all followers of Sankaráchárya, and with Benares as the centre, his influence is simply immense in many parts of Northern India also.

Now both Sankara and Râmánuja laid aside all claim to originality. Râmánuja expressly tells us he is only following the great commentary of Bodháyana.\* He takes it up and makes of it an abridged version, a *Sankshiptam*, and that is what we have to-day as the Sri Bhasyam of Râmánuja. I myself never had an opportunity of seeing this commentary of Bodháyana. The late Svámi Dayánanda Saraswati wanted to reject every other commentary of Vyása Sûtras except that of Bodháyana, and although, he never lost an opportunity of having a fling at Râmánuja, he himself could never produce the original

The work of Sankara and Ramanuja are not entirely original.

\* "अगवदोपायनकृतां विस्तीर्णं ब्रह्मसूत्रं पुर्याचाचार्यः

संक्षिप्युः तन्मतानुसारिणं सूत्राचारादि व्याख्यास्यते ॥"

Bodháyana. I have sought for it all over India, but never yet have been able to see it. Rámánuja, however, is very plain on the point, telling us that he is taking the ideas, and sometimes the very passages, out of Bodháyana, and condensing them into his Sri Bháshya. It seems that Sankarácháya was also doing the same. There are a few places in his Bháshya which mention older commentaries, and when we know that his Guru and his Guru's Guru had been Vedántists of the same school as he, and were on certain points sometimes even bolder and more thorough-going than Sankara himself, it seems pretty plain that he also was not preaching anything very original and that even in his Bháshya he himself had been doing the same work that Rámánuja did with Bodháyana ; but from what Bháshya Sankara did it cannot be discovered at the present time. And all these Darsanas that you have ever seen or heard of are all based upon Upanishadic authority. Whenever they wanted to quote a Sruti, they meant the Upanishads, and always quoted them. There are other philosophies also based on the Upanishads, but they failed in getting that hold upon India which the philosophy of Vyása got, although that philosophy of Vyása is but a development of an older one, the Sánkhyā. And every philosophy and every system of thought in India—and not only of India, but of the world also—owes much to the founder of the Sánkhyā system, Kapila, perhaps the greatest name in the history of India in psychological and philo-

**Their teachings based upon works of older Gurus and Upanishads.**

**Sankhya of Kapila.\***

sophical lines. The influence of Kapila can be discerned everywhere, throughout the world. Wherever there is a recognised system of thought, it can be traced to his influence. It may be thousands of years back that it was so influenced, but yet it is there, the influence of the shining, glorious, wonderful Kapila. His psychology and a good deal of his philosophy have been accepted by all the different sects of India with but very little variations. In Bengal, our Naiyáyik philosophers could not make much impression on the philosophical world of India. They were too busy discussing little things like species and genus and produced only the most cumbersome terminology, which is a life's work to study. As such, they were very busy with logic and left philosophy to the Vedántists. Every one of the Indian philosophic sects of modern times, however, has adopted the logical terminology of the Naiyáyiks of Bengal. Jagadis, Gadádhar, and Síromani are as well-known in some of the cities in Malabar as in Nuddea. But the philosophy of Vyása, the Vyása Sûtras, is firm-seated, and has attained perfection in what it intended to present to men, the orthodox and Vedántic side of philosophy. In it, reason has been entirely subordinated to the Srutis, and it is as Sankaráchárya declares, Vyása does not care to reason at all and his idea in writing the sūtras is just to make a garland of the flowers of Vedántic texts by bringing them together with one thread. His Sūtras are admitted by all sects because they are subordinate

Naiyayika  
school.

Vyasa  
Sutras.



to the authority of the Upanishads and for no other reason. So, all the sects of India now hold these Vyása Sūtras as the great authority and every new sect in India starts with a fresh commentary on the Sūtras according to its own light. And although difference between some of these commentators is sometimes very great, and the text-torturing in them is quite disgusting, yet the Vyása Sūtras have got the place of authority, and, no one can expect to found a sect in India until he can write a fresh commentary on them.

**The Gita.**

Next in authority is the celebrated Gitá. The great glory of Sankaráchárya was his preaching of the Gitá. Among the many noble works of the noble life of this great man, the greatest is his preaching of the Gitá and writing the most beautiful commentary on it. And he has been followed by all founders of other orthodox sects in India, each of whom has written a commentary on the Gitá.

**The Upanishads : some are modern and sectarian.**

The Upanishads are many. They are said to be one hundred and eight, some declare them to be still larger. Some of these are evidently of a much later date, as, for instance, the Allopanishad, in which Allah is praised and Mahomet is called the Rajasulla. I have been told that this was written during the reign of Akbar, to bring the Hindus and the Mahomedans together. They got hold of some word, as Allah, or Illa, in the Samhitās and made an Upanishad on it. So in this Allopanishad, Mahomet is the Rajasulla, whatever that may mean. There are other sectarian

Upanishads of the same class, which you find to be entirely modern. And it has been easy to do so because the language of the Samhita portion of the Vedas is archaic and there is no grammar to it. Years ago I had an idea of studying the grammar of the Vedas, and I began with all earnestness to study Pánini and the Mahábháshya, but to my surprise I found that the best part of the Vedic grammar consisted only of exceptions to rules. A rule is made and after that comes a statement that in the Vedas, "This rule will be an exception." So you see what an amount of liberty there is for anybody to write anything, the only safeguard being the dictionary of Yáska. In this you will find only a large number of synonyms for the most part. Given all that, you find how easy it is to write any number of Upanishads you please. You need only to have a little knowledge of Sanskrit, enough to make words look like the old archaic words, and then you have nothing to fear for grammar. You bring in *Rajasulla* or any other *Sulla* you like. In that way many Upanishads have been manufactured, and, I am told, they are being manufactured even now. In some parts of India, I am perfectly certain, they are trying to manufacture such Upanishads even now, among the different sects. But among the Upanishads are those which bear the evidence of genuineness on the face of them. It is only these that have been taken up by great commentators, as, Sankara and Rámánuja, and all the rest have commented upon them in their turn also.

Genuine  
and Ancient  
ones com-  
mented  
upon by  
Sankara  
and others.

The poetical  
merits of the  
Upanishads.

Attempt to  
reach the  
infinite  
through the  
external  
world.

One or two more ideas with regard to the Upanishads, I want to bring to your notice, for the knowledge contained in them is like a vast ocean and cannot be compassed in one lecture. It would take years for an incompetent person like myself to do that. I want therefore to bring to your notice one or two salient points in the study of the Upanishads. In the first place, they are the most marvellous poems in the world. If you read the Samhita portion of the Vedas, you find now and then passages of most marvellous beauty, as, for instance, the famous *Sloka* which describes Chaos—"In the beginning, when darkness was hidden in darkness."\* One reads and feels instantly the wonderful sublimity of the poetry in it. There have been attempts at painting the sublime both in and outside of India. At first it has always been the infinite of physical immensity, the immensity of the external world, or the infinity of matter, or of space. When Milton or Dante, or any other great European poet, either ancient or modern, wants to paint a picture of the infinite, he tries to soar outside, to make you feel the infinite through objects of the senses. Such an attempt has been made here in the Samhitas also, where you find the infinite of extension most marvellously painted and placed before readers, such as has been done nowhere else. For mark that one sentence, "In the beginning when darkness was hidden in

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\* "तम आसीन् तमसा गूढम्"

darkness." And compare it with the description of darkness by other poets of the later age. Your own Kālidāsa says, "Darkness which can be penetrated with the point of a needle ;" Milton says, "No light but rather darkness visible ;" but come to this, here—"Darkness was covering darkness," "Darkness was hidden in darkness."—this is the most marvellous description of them all. We who live in the tropics can understand it very well, when during the sudden outburst of the monsoon, in a moment, the horizon becomes dark and clouds become covered with more and more of rolling black clouds. But yet, in the Samhita portion, such attempts are of the sublime in the external. Like everywhere else, here also the attempts at finding the solution of great problems of life have first lain through the external world. Just as the Greek mind or the modern European mind wants to find the solution of life and of all the sacred problems of Being, by searching into the external world, so the Indian mind also did once, and just as the Europeans have failed here, so, our forefathers failed also. But here comes the difference. The Westerns never made a move more, they remained there, they failed in the search for the solution of the great problems of life and death in the external world and there they remained, stranded ; our forefathers, on the other hand, failed like them, but were bold to declare the utter helplessness of the senses to find the solution. Nowhere else was this better put than in the Upanishad, "the eyes cannot reach that, nor the

The attempt unsuccessful both in Europe and here.

The Hindu's process to reach the infinite through introspection.

speech," "from where the word comes back reflected by the mind unable to teach It."\* Thus there are various sentences, in the Upanishads, which declare the utter helplessness of the senses. But our forefathers did not stop there, they fell back upon the internal nature of man, they went to get the solution in their own soul, they became introspective. They gave up external nature as a failure, as no hope, no answer, could be found there; they discovered the fact that dull, dead matter would never give them the truth—the solution of the problems of Being, and so fell back upon the shining soul of man and the answer was found there and there alone. "Know this *Atman*," they declared, and "give up all vain words,"† In the *Atman* they found the solution; in the greatest of all *atmans*, the God, the Lord of the Universe, they found the relation of the *atman* of man to Him, our duty to Him, and our relation to each other through Him. No more is the attempt made to paint this *Atman* in the language of matter. Nay, in describing it, they have given up all positive language. And herein you find the most sublime poetry in the world. No more is there any attempt to come to the senses, to give them the idea of the infinite, no more is there an external, dull, dead, material, spatial, sensuous infinite, but

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\* "यतो वाचो निवर्तते अप्राप्य मनसा सह  
न तत्र चक्षुर्गच्छति न वाक् गच्छति ।

† "तन्निवेद्यं ज्ञानं आत्मानं चन्मावाप्नोति मुक्तयः ॥"

instead of that, comes something which transcends them all; as has been expressed in saying, "There the sun cannot illumine, nor the moon, nor the stars, a flash of lightning cannot illumine it; what to speak of this mortal fire!"† And what poetry in the world can be more sublime than this! Such poetry you find nowhere else. Take that most marvellous Upanishad, the Katha. What wonderful finish, what most marvellous art has been displayed in that poem! How wonderfully it opens with that little child to whom *Sraddha* came, who wanted to see Yama, and how that most marvellous of all teachers, Death Himself, taught him the great lessons of life and death! And what was his quest? To know the secret of death.

The second point that I want you to remember is the perfectly impersonal character of the Upanishads. Although we find many names and many speakers and many teachers in the Upanishads, not one of them stands as the authority of the Upanishads, not a single verse is based upon the life of any one of them. These are simply figures like shadows moving in the background, unfelt, unseen, unrealised, but the real force is in the marvellous, the brilliant, the effulgent, and perfectly impersonal texts of the Upanishads. If twenty *Vājñavalkyas* come, and live, and die, it does not matter; the texts are there. And

Impersonal  
character of  
the Upani-  
shads.

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† "न तवीं सूर्यो भाति न चन्द्रतारकं, नेमा विद्युती  
भाति कुवीरुवमपि ।

तमेव भासन्ननुभाति सर्वं, तस्य भासा सर्वमिदं विभाति ॥"

The Upanishads are our scriptures.

The Puranas, Tantras, Vyasa-Sutras are scriptures of lesser authority.

yet it is against no personality ; it is broad and expansive enough to embrace all the personalities that the world has yet produced and all that are yet to be produced. It has nothing to say against the worship of persons, or Avatârs, or sages. On the other hand it is always upholding it. At the same time, it is perfectly impersonal. This impersonal nature of the Upanishads, like the God they preach, is marvellous. For the sage, the thinker, the rationalist, the philosopher it is as much impersonal as any man can wish. And such are our scriptures. You must remember that what the Bible is to the Christians, what the Koran is to the Mahommedans, what the Tripitaka is to the Buddhists, what the Zend Avesta is to the Parsis, so are these Upanishads to us. These and nothing but these, are our scriptures. The Puranas, the Tantras, and all the other books, even the Vyasa Sutras, are of secondary and tertiary authority, but primary are the Upanishads. Manu, and the Puranas, and all the other books are to be taken so far as they agree with the authority of the Upanishads, and when they disagree they are to be rejected without mercy. This we ought to remember always, but unfortunately in India at the present time we have forgotten it. A petty village custom is regarded at present as the authority for the Upanishads ! A petty idea current in a wayside village in Bengal is regarded to have not only equal authority with it, but even something more ! And that word "orthodox," how wonderful is its influence ! To the

villager, following every little bit of the *Karma-kanda* is the very height of "orthodoxy;" and one who does not do it is regarded by him to be no more a Hindu. So there are, most unfortunately, persons, in Bengal, who will take up one of the Tantras and say that the injunctions of that Tantra alone is to be obeyed; he who does not do so is no more orthodox in his views. Therefore it is better for us to remember that in the Upanishads is the primary authority, even the *Grihya* and *Srauta Sutras* are subordinate to their authority. They are the words of the Rishis, our forefathers, and you have to believe them if you want to become a Hindu. You may even believe the most peculiar ideas about the God-head but if you deny the authority of the Upanishads, you are a *Nastika*, a sceptic. Therein is the difference of the scriptures of the Christians or the Buddhists with ours; they are all Puranas, because they describe the history of the deluge and the history of kings and reigning families, and record the lives of great men, and so on. That is the work of the Puranas, and so far as they agree with the Upanishads, they are very good. So far as the Bible agrees with the Vedas it is perfectly good, but when it does not agree it is no more to be accepted. So with the Koran; there are many moral teachings in it and so far as it agrees with the Upanishads, it has the authority of the Puranas, but no more. The idea is that the Upanishads were never written, the idea is they never came into existence by the power of man. I was told once by a Christian

The Bible  
and the  
Koran  
belong to  
the same  
class of  
scriptures.



missionary that their scriptures have a historical basis and are therefore true. To which I replied, "mine have ~~no~~ historical character and therefore mine are true ; yours being historical, they were evidently made by some man the other day. Yours are man-made and mine not so ; their non-historicity is in their favour." Such is the relation of the Vedas to the scriptures of the nations of the present day.

Teachings  
of the  
Upanishads.

We now come to the teachings of the Upanishads. Various texts are there in them. Some are perfectly dualistic. What do I mean by dualistic? I am using the word in the sense that it has got in India and not in the West. There are certain doctrines which are agreed to by all the different sects of India. First, there is the doctrine of *Samsara*, or, re-incarnation of the soul. Secondly, they all agree in their psychology, which says, first, there is the body, behind that, the *Sukshma-Sarira*, the mind, and behind that even, is the *jiva*. The great difference between the Western and Indian Psychology is that in the former the mind is the soul, in the latter it is not so. The *Antahkarana*, the internal instrument, as the mind is called in the Indian psychology, is only an instrument in the hands of the *jiva*, through which the *jiva* works on the body and on the external world. Here all the different sects agree and they all also agree to the doctrine that this *jiva*, or *Atman*, or *Jivatma*, as it is called variously by them, is eternal, without beginning, and that it is going from birth to birth until it gets the final release.

They all agree in this and they also all agree in another most vital point, which alone marks most prominently the difference between the Indian and the western mind, and it is this, that all power is in the soul. There is no inspiration, but properly speaking, "expiration." All powers and all purity and all greatness—everything is in the soul. The Yogi would tell you that the *Siddhis*—*Anima*, *Laghima*,\* and so on, that he wants to attain to, are not to be attained in the proper sense of the word, but are already there in the soul ; the work is to make them manifest. Pantanjali, for instance, would tell you that even in the lowest worm that crawls under your feet are all the Yogi's eightfold powers already existing potentially. The non-manifestation of these is only on account of its body. As soon as it gets a fitter body the powers will become manifest, but they are there even now.† In relation to this, Patanjali gives the celebrated example of the cultivator bringing water into his field from a huge tank somewhere. The tank is already filled and the water would flood his land in a moment, only there is a wall between the tank and his field. As soon as the barrier is broken, in rushes the water, of its own power and force. For

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\* *Anima*—the yogic power of becoming as small as an atom.

\* *Laghima*—the yogic power of becoming excessively light at will.

† "निमित्तमप्रयोजकं प्रकृतीणां वरचमेदमु ततः चेन्निकम् ।"

all power and purity and perfection are in the soul already. The difference in manifestation is owing to this *avarana*—this veil—that has been cast over it. Once the veil is removed the soul manifests its purity and powers. This, you ought to remember, is the great difference between Eastern and Western thought. When you find people teaching such awful doctrines as that we are all born sinners and because we do not believe in such awful doctrines we are all born wicked, know that they never stop to think that if we are by our very nature wicked we can never be good ; for how can nature change ? If it changes, it contradicts itself ; it is not nature. We ought to remember this. In this point the Dualist and the Advaitist and all other sects in India agree.

On God,  
Personal  
and  
Absolute.

As it stands at present, the next point is that, all the sects in India believe in God. Of course their ideas of God are different. The Dualists believe in a Personal God only. I want you to understand this word 'Personal', a little more. The word Personal does not mean that God has a body, sits on a throne somewhere and rules this world, but it means *Saguna*, with qualities. There are many descriptions of the Personal God. This Personal God as the Ruler, the Creator, the Preserver, and the Destroyer, of this universe, is believed in by all the sects. The Advaitists believe something more. They believe in a still higher phase of this Personal God, which is personal-impersonal. No adjective can be applied to express the nature of That which has no qualification,

and the Advaitist would not give That qualities, except the three—*Satchidānanda*, Existence, Knowledge and Bliss Absolute. This is what Sankara did. But the Upanishads themselves penetrate even further, and say, nothing can be said except *neti, neti*, “not this, not this” of the nature of that Absolute. Here all the different sects of India agree.

In talking about Dualism—as I have said already, Ramanuja's system. I will take Rāmānuja as the typical dualist of India, as the great modern representative of the dualistic systems. It is a pity that our people in Bengal know so very little about the great religious leaders of India, who have been born in other parts of the country. And for the matter of that, during the whole of the Mahomedan period, with the exception of our Chaitanya, all the great religious leaders were born in Southern India, and it is the intellect of Southern India that is really governing India now ; for even Chaitanya belonged to one of these Southern sects, a sect of the Mādhyas. According to Rāmānuja there are three entities that are eternal—God, and soul, and Nature. The souls are eternal, and they will remain eternally existing, and will retain their individuality all through eternity. Your soul will be different from my soul through all eternity, says Rāmānuja. So also this Nature, which is an existing fact, and as much existing a fact as soul, and will remain always. And God is interpenetrating, the essence of the soul. In this sense He is the *Antaryāmin* ; in this sense, Rāmānuja sometimes thinks that God is one with the

soul, the essence of the soul, and these souls; at the time of *Pralaya*, when the whole of Nature becomes what he calls *Sankuchita*, contracted, become contracted also, and remain so for a time. And at the beginning of the next cycle they all come out and becoming expanded again, take shape, according to their past *Karma*, and undergo the effect of that *Karma*. Every action that makes the inborn natural purity and perfection of the soul go inside, by getting contracted, is a bad action, and every action that makes it come out and expand itself is a good action, says Rámánuja. Whatever helps make the Vikása or expansion of the soul is good, and whatever leads to *Sankocha* or contraction, is bad. And thus the soul is going on, expanding or contracting by its actions, till through the grace of God, comes Salvation. And that grace comes to all souls, says Rámánuja, to all that struggle for it and become pure. There is a celebrated verse in the Srutis, "When the food is pure then the *Sattva* becomes pure ; when the *Sattva* is pure, then the *smriti*, the memory of the Lord,—or the memory of your own perfection if you are an Advaitist—becomes truer, steadier, and absolute."\* Here lies a great controversy. First of all what is that *Sattva*? We know that according to the Sāṅkhya philosophy, —and it has been admitted by all our schools of philosophy—the body is composed of three sorts of materials—not qualities, though it is the general idea

that *Sattva*, *Rajas* and *Tamas* are qualities; it is not so, they are not qualities but the materials out of which this universe is made. And when the food is pure, or by *Ahara Suddhi*, the *Sattva* material becomes pure. A great theme of the Vedānta is how to get this *Sattva*. As I have told you, the soul is already pure and perfect, but it is, according to the Vedānta, covered up by *Rajas* and *Tamas* particles. The *Sattva* particles are the most luminous and the effulgence of the soul penetrates through them as easily as light through glass. So if the *Rajas* and *Tamas* particles go, and there remain only the *Sattva* particles, the power and purity of the soul will appear and become more manifest. Therefore it is necessary to have this *Sattva*, as the text says, "We know when the *āhāra* becomes pure." Rāmānuja takes *āhāra* to mean food, and he has made it one of the turning points of his philosophy. Not only so, but the sense in which he has taken the word has affected the whole of India and all the different dualistic sects. Therefore it is necessary for us to understand what the word means, for that, according to Rāmānuja, is one of the principal factors in our life, *āhāra suddhi*. What makes food impure, asks Rāmānuja? Three sorts of defects make food impure—first, *jāti*, the very nature of the class to which the food belongs, as onions, garlic, and so on, next is *āsraya*, the person from whom the food comes—if a wicked person becomes the *āsraya*, then the food given by him will make you impure. I myself have seen many great

sages in India following strictly that advice and avoiding to take food given by impure persons all their lives. Of course they had the power to know the nature of the person who brought the food and even, who had touched the food, and I have seen that in my own life, not once, but hundreds of times. *Nimitta-dosha*, or impurity of food brought on by contact with impure thing, is another. We had better attend to that a little more now and avoid taking such food, for very often, we in India, disregard it. If the food has become impure with dust and bits of hair falling into it, we should not take it. If food is taken from which these three aforesaid defects have been removed, that makes *sattva-suddhi*, that purifies the *Sattva*. To realise religion becomes a very easy task then. And everyone can purify his *Sattva* by eating pure food only and there is none so weak or incompetent in this world, who cannot save himself from these defects.

Then comes Sankarácárya, who says this word *áhára* means thought collected in the mind, when that becomes pure, the *sattva* becomes pure, and not before that. You may eat what you like. If food alone would purify the *Sattva*, then feed the monkey with milk and rice all its life, would it become a great Yogi? The cows and the deer would become great Yogis first. As has been said, if it is by bathing much, the fishes will get to heaven first. If by eating vegetables a man gets to heaven, the cows and the deer will get to heaven first. Then, what is the

solution? Both are necessary, the external purity of the food as well as the purity of the thoughts in the mind. Of course the meaning that Sankarácárya gives us of the word "*Ahara*" is the primary idea. But pure food, no doubt, helps pure thought ; the one has an intimate connection with the other, therefore both ought to be there. But the defect is that in modern India we have forgotten the interpretation of Sankarácárya and are taking only the "pure food" meaning of the word. That is why people get mad with me when I say religion has got into the kitchen. If you had been in Madras with me you would have agreed to what I say. You Bengalees are better than that, but in Madras they throw away food if any body looks at it even. And with all that precaution about taking pure food, I do not see that the people are any the better off than we are here. If only eating this and that sort of food and saving it from the looks of this person and that person would give them perfection you would expect them all to be perfect men by now, which they are not.

Thus, to get the full significance of the word '*Ahara*', we should combine the meanings which Sankaracharya and Ramanuja give of it, together, to make a perfect whole. But in going to attend to this purification of '*Ahara*', we should not put the cart before the horse. There is a cry now-a-days about taking this and that kind of food, and about *Varnasrama*, and the Bengalees are the most clamorous in these respects. I would ask every one of you : what

Varnas-  
rama in  
Bengal.



do you know about this *Varnásrama*? Where are the four castes to-day in this country? I do not see them anywhere. Your clamour about the *Varnásrama* here, is like a headache without a head, as the Bengalee proverb has it. The four castes of old, are not to be found here, but only the Brahman and the Sudra. If the Kshatriyas and the Vaisyas are here, then why do not you Brahmins allow them to take the *Yagnopavita* and study the Vedas, as every Hindu is enjoined by the *Sástras*?—again, if the Vaisyas and the Kshatriyas do not exist, but only the Brahmins and the *Súdras*, then the *Sástras* say that the Brahmin must not live in a country where there are *Súdras* only. So the Brahmins should depart from this country, bag and baggage. Do you know what the *Sástras* say about people who earn their living by serving the *mlechchas*? And living under a government of the *mlechchas*, as you have been doing for the last thousand years, do you know the penance for that as recorded there? The penance is to burn one's self with one's own hands. Do you want to pass as teachers when you live like hypocrites? If you believe in your *Sástras* burn yourselves first like that great Brahmin, who went with Alexander the Great and burnt himself because he thought he had eaten the food of the *mlechchas*. Do like that and you will see that the whole nation will be at your feet. You do not believe in your own *Sástras*, and yet attempt to make others believe in them! If you find that it is not possible to live according to your *Sástras* in this age, admit your

weakness and excuse such weakness in others. Take the other castes up and give them a helping hand, let them study the Vedas and become Aryans. And be you likewise Aryans, by studying the Vedas, you Brahmins of Bengal. Study the Vedas and give up this filthy *Vámáchára*\* that is killing Bengal and other parts of India. When I see how much *Vámáchára* has entered our society, I find it a most disgraceful place with all its boast of culture. These *Vámáchára* sects are honeycombing our society in Bengal. And many of those who preach most loudly about '*Achára*' in the day time, carry on the most horrible debauchery at night, and in this they are backed by the most dreadful books. They are enjoined by their books to do these things. You, who are of Bengal, know it. The *Vámáchára* Tantras are the Bengalees' *Sástras* now. They are published by the cart-load, and you poison the minds of your children with these, instead of teaching them your *Srutis*. Do you not feel a shame, you, who are fathers, that such horrible stuff as these *Vámáchára* Tantras, with translations too, should be put into the hands of your children and their minds poisoned, and that they should be brought up with the idea that these are the *Sástras* of the Hindus? If you do, take them away from your children and let them read the true *Sástras*, the Vedas, the Gita, the Upanishads.

Vamachar  
in Bengal.

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\* A very gross form of the worship of Sakti, the wife of Siva, in which the eating of flesh, drinking of spirits and gross forms of sensual indulgences are regarded as necessary parts.

According to the dualistic sects of India, the individual souls remain as individuals throughout, and God is the Creator of the universe out of pre-existing material, and He is only the efficient cause of it. According to the Advaitists, on the other hand, God is both the material and the efficient cause of the universe. He is not only the Creator of the universe, but He creates it out of Himself. That is the Advaitist position. There are crude dualistic sects who believe that this world has been created by God out of Himself, yet He is eternally separate from the universe, and the Ruler of it. There are sects too who also believe that out of Himself, God has evolved this Universe, and individual souls in the long run attain to *Nirvāṇa* by giving up their finite nature and becoming the infinite. But these sects have disappeared. The one sect of Advaitists that you see in modern India is composed of the followers of Sankara. According to Sankara, God is both the material and the efficient cause of this universe, through *Māyā*. But in reality, God has not become this universe, for, the universe does not exist, and all that is, is God. This is one of the highest points to understand of Advaita Vedānta, this idea of *Māyā*. I am afraid I have no time to discuss this one most difficult point in our philosophy, those of you who are acquainted with Western philosophy will find something very similar in Kant. But I must warn those of you who have studied Professor Max Muller's writings on Kant, that there is one idea in his version of Kant

Advaitism  
and the  
Theory of  
Maya.

Kant and  
Maya.

which is most misleading. It was Sankara and not Kant, who first found out the idea of the identity of time, space and causation with *Máyá*, and I had the good fortune to find one or two such passages in Sankara's commentaries and send them to my friend the Professor. So even that idea of Kant was here in India. Now this is a peculiar theory—this *Máyá* theory of the Advaita Vedántists. The *Brahman* is all that exists, but differentiation has been caused by this *Máyá*. Unity, the one *Brahman*, is the ultimate, the goal, and herein is an eternal dissension again between Indian and Western thought. India has thrown this challenge to the world for thousands of years, and the challenge has been taken up by different nations, and the result is that they all succumbed and you live. This is the challenge, that this world is a delusion, that it is all *Máyá*, that whether you eat out of the ground with your fingers, or dine out of gold plates, whether you live in palaces as the mightiest of monarchs, or are the poorest of beggars, it is all the same, death is the one result, it is all *Máyá*. That is the old Indian theme, and again and again nations are springing up trying to unsay it, to disprove it, by becoming great, with enjoyment as their watchword and power in their hands, and using that power to the utmost to enjoy the world to the utmost, and dying the next moment, while we stand for ever, we, who see that everything is *Máyá*. The children of *Máyá* live for ever, but the children of enjoyment die.

**Hegel  
Versus  
Vedanta.**

Here again is another great difference. You will find the ideas that Hegel and Schopenhauer brought in German Philosophy coming up in India also. Fortunately for us, Hegelianism was nipped in the bud and not allowed to sprout forth and cast its baneful off-shoots over this mother-land of ours. Hegel's idea is that the one, the absolute, is something undeterminable, like chaos, and that the individualised form of it is the greater. Thus it comes to this that the world is greater than the non-world, Samsára is greater than Salvation, and the more you plunge into this Samsára and the more your soul gets the impressions of the workings of this life, the better you are. As a result, they say, do you not see how we build houses, cleanse the streets, enjoy the senses? Aye, they do it, to be sure, but behind every bit of that enjoyment they hide rancour, misery, and horror. On the other hand, our philosophers have from the very first declared that every manifestation, what you call evolution, is vain, a vain attempt of the unmanifested to manifest itself. Aye, you who are infinite, the almighty cause of this universe, trying to reflect yourself into finite little mud-puddles! After making the attempt for a time you will find out that it is vain and would beat retreat to the place from whence you came. And this is *Vairágya*, or renunciation, the very beginning of religion. How can religion or morality begin without renunciation? "Give up," says the Vedas, "give up." That is the one way, give up. "Neither through

**Renuncia-  
tion leads  
to immor-  
tality.**

wealth, nor through progeny, but by renunciation alone is immortality to be reached.”\* That is the dictate of the Indian Rishis. Of course, there have been those who renounced the world even when they sat on the thrones. But even Janaka himself had to renounce. Aye, who renounced more than he? But in modern times we all want to be Janaka without his renunciation. Yes, they are but Janakas† of children—unclad, ill-fed, miserable children. They are Janaka in that sense only and have none of the shining spiritual realisation such as the old Janaka had. Such are our modern Janakas. A little less of this Janakism is required at present. If you can give up, you will have religion. If you cannot, you may read all the books that are in the world, in the East and the West, swallow all the libraries, and become the greatest of Pandits, yet you are nothing ; there is no spirituality in you. Through renunciation alone can immortality be reached. It is the power, the great power, that cares not even for the universe, to which “the whole universe becomes trifling like a hollow made by a cow’s foot.”‡ Renunciation is the banner of India that float over the world, it is the one undying thought which India sends again and again as a warning to dying races, as a warning to all tyranny, as a warning to all wickedness in the world.

\* “न प्रजया धनेन न चेज्जया, त्यागेनैकेन अमृतमनमयः”

† Janaka, literally, a father.

‡ “ब्रह्माङ्क गोपदायते ।”

Aye, Hindus, let not your hold of that banner go. Hold it aloft. Even if you are weak, and cannot renounce the world, do not be hypocrites, do not make specious arguments by torturing the texts and trying to throw dust in the eyes of people. Do not do that, but declare you are weak. For the idea is great, that of renunciation. What matters if millions fail in the attempt, and ten, or even one or two only realise that great ideal and return victorious. Blessed be the millions dead! For their blood has bought the victory. This renunciation is the one ideal of all the different Vedic sects except one, and that is the Vallabhacharya sect in the Bombay Presidency; and most of you are aware what comes where renunciation does not exist. We want orthodoxy, even the hideously orthodox, even those who smother themselves with ashes, even those who stand with their hands uplifted. Aye, we want them all, unnatural though they are, for standing for renunciation and acting as a warning to the race against succumbing to the effeminate luxuries that are creeping into India, trying to eat into our very vitals and make the whole race a race of hypocrites. We want to have that spirit of renunciation, which conquered India in the days of yore, and we want it more even now to do the same work. Renunciation is always the greatest and the highest of Indian ideals. The land of Buddha, the land of Rámánuja, of Rámakrishna Paramahansa, the land that has preached against *Karma-kánda* from the days of yore and where even to-day there are

hundreds who have given up everything and become *Jivanmuktas*—aye, will that land give up its ideal? Certainly not. There may be people whose brains have become turned with Western ideas of luxury ; there may be thousands and hundreds of thousands, who have drunk deep of sense-enjoyment, the curse of the West, as well as of the whole world, yet for all that there will be the other thousands in this motherland of mine to whom religion will be a reality and who will be ready to give up, if need be, without counting the cost.

I want to place before you another ideal which is very common to all our sects. It is also a vast subject. This idea is unique in India alone. It is this that religion is to be realized. "This Atman is not to be reached by too much talking, nor is it to be reached by the power of intellect."\* Nay, ours is the only scripture in the world that declares the truth that not even by the study of the scriptures is the Atman to be realised—not talks, not lecturing, none of that, but it is to be realised. This power of realisation passes from the teacher unto the disciple. When insight comes to the disciple by the power transmitted from the teacher, his vision clears up and realisation comes. A few words more in this connection. There is a peculiar system in Bengal which goes by the name of the *kulaguru* system.† It is somewhat in this fashion ; my father has been your Guru, so I will be the Guru

Religion is realization.

Who is the real Guru?

\* "नायमात्मा प्रवचनेन लब्धी, न निश्चया न बहुना श्रुतेन ।"

† Hereditary Guruship.



of all the members of your family or that my father has been the Guru of your father so I will be yours. Now, what is a Guru? Let us go back to the Srutis for the answer, it says that he who knows the secret of the Vedas is the Guru, not book-worms, not Grammarians, not Pandits in general, but he who knows the real meaning of the Vedas. The Pandits in general are like, "the asses laden with masses of sandal wood, knowing only the weight of the wood, but not its precious qualities"; such can never be real Gurus, for what can they teach if they have no realisation themselves? When I was a boy here in this city of Calcutta, I used to go from place to place in search of religion, and everyone whom I asked after hearing his tall talks on religion, if he had seen God, would be astounded at the very idea of it. And the only man who told me, "yes, I have seen God," was Rāmakrishna Paramahansa, and not only so, but he said further, "I will put you in the way of seeing Him too." Such is the real Guru and not a man who can twist and torture texts, for, as Sankara says, "Different ways of throwing out words, different ways of explaining texts of the scriptures, these serve only to bring honour to the feats of intellect of the learned but are not conducive to the freedom of the soul."\* The real Guru, on the other hand, should be a *Srotriya*, he who knows the secret of the Srutis, *Avrijina*, the

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\* 'गान्धेयस्य ब्रह्मसूत्रे ब्राह्मव्याख्यानकोशले । वेदस्य तद्वत्तये न तु मुक्तये ।'

sinless, and *Akamahata*, he who does not want to make money by teaching you. He is *Sánta*, peaceful by nature, the *Sadhu*, the man of realisation, who comes as the spring, which brings the leaves and fruits to various plants, but does not ask anything of them in return for its very nature is to do good. He does good and there it ends. Such is the Guru. "Who has himself crossed this ocean of life, and without any idea of gain to himself, helps others to cross that ocean also."\* That is the Guru, and mark that none else can be a Guru. For the others are as the Upanishads say, "Themselves steeped in darkness, they, who in the pride of their hearts think they know everything and do not stop even there but want to help others, like the blind leading the blind, both fall into the ditch."† Compare that with your present custom. You are Vedántists, you are very orthodox, are you not? You are great Hindus, and very orthodox! Aye, what I want to do is to make you more orthodox. For real orthodoxy would make you more sensible, while the more you attempt to retain the so-called orthodoxy which you have got at present, the more foolish you would be. So go back to the old orthodoxy of the

\* "तीनां स्वयं भीमभवाच्चैव जनाः  
अचेतनान्मानपि तारयन्तः।"

† "अविद्यायामन्तरे वर्तमानाः  
स्वयं घोरैः पङ्क्तिमन्त्रबन्धनाः ।  
अहम्बन्धनाः परित्यज्य मूढाः  
अन्धेनेव जीवन्तानां बध्नान्धः ॥"

Upanishads, for every word that came from them, every pulsation, was the expression of strong, steady, and sincere hearts ; every note of them was true. But after the Upanishadic age, came national degradation, in art, in science, in religion, in everything. We have no time to discuss the causes for that, but all the books written in that period breathe of pestilence and of national decay, and instead of vigour, they only send out wails and cries. So go back, go back to the old days, when there was strength and vitality. Be strong once more, drink deep of this fountain of yore and that is the only condition of reviving national life in India.

**Individuality according to Advaita.**

But to return to our point, according to the Advaitist, this individuality which we have at present is a delusion. This has been a hard nut to crack all over the world. Forthwith you tell a man he is not an individual, he is afraid that with his individuality, whatever that may be, he will be lost also. But the Advaitist says there never has been an individuality in you, for you are changing every moment of your life. When you were a child you used to think in one way, you are a man now and think another way, you will be an old man sometime and think in another way still. Thus everyone of you is changing. If so, where is your individuality? Certainly not in the body, or in the mind, or in thought. And beyond that is your Atman, and, says the Advaitist, this Atman is the Brahman itself. There cannot be two Infinites. It is the only one individual and it is

Infinite. In plain words, we are rational beings, and we want to reason. And what is reason? It is more or less of classification of objects of thought until you cannot go on any further. And the infinite can only find its ultimate rest when it is 'classified' into the Infinite. Take up a finite something and try to find its reasons, you will find rest nowhere until you reach the infinite ultimately and that infinite, says the Advaitist, is what alone exists. Everything else is *Máyá*, anything else does not exist; whatever there is of existence in any material thing, is this *Brahman*; we are this *Brahman*, and the shape and everything else in it is *Máyá*. Take off the form and shape, and you and I are all one. But we have to guard against the word, 'I'. Generally people say, if I am the *Brahman*, why cannot I do this and do that, but then they confuse themselves by using the word 'I' in two different senses. If you think you are bound you are no more *Brahman*, the Self, who wants nothing and whose light is inside. All his pleasures and bliss are within himself, he is perfectly satisfied with himself, he wants nothing, he expects nothing; he is perfectly fearless, perfectly free. Such is the nature of *Brahman* and in that we are all one.

Now in this question of individuality lies the great point of difference between the Dualist and the Advaitist. You find even a great commentator like Sankarácárya, reading meanings into the texts of the Upanishads, to prove his own standpoint, which, to my mind, sometimes do not seem justified. Some-

Unity in  
Variety.

times you find Rámánuja also dealing with those texts in a similar way. The idea that the Upanishads discard all variety in Religion obtains among the Pandits of the present day even, for they think either the Dualist or the Advaitist can be true and not both of them, although they have come across the most wonderful idea that the Srutis preach, the idea that India has yet to give to the world, *Ekam sat viprá bahudhá vadanti* "That which exists is one ; the sages call it by various names." That has been the one great theme and problem which the nation has been working out all through its life, that very theme only—*Ekam sadviprá bahudhá vadanti*. Yea, except a very few spiritual men in India, we always forget this. We forget this great idea, and you will find that ninety-eight per cent. of our learned men even, are of opinion that either the Advaitist or the Visishtádvaitist, or the Dvaitist, alone, is true, and if you go to Benares, and sit for five minutes in one of those ghats you will see practical demonstration of what I say. You will see a regular bull-fight going on, with that idea as the basis of it. Thus stands the matter, and now comes one whose life serves to give us an explanation of the variety of religious ideas in the Scriptures, one who in his life has worked out and found the harmony that is, at the back-ground of all the different sects of India, I mean, Ramakrishna Paramahansa. It is his life that explains that both Dualism and Advaitism are necessary ; that they are like the geocentric and the heliocentric theories in

Harmony  
of all reli-  
gions pre-  
eminently  
the teaching  
of Rama  
Krishna.

astronomy. When a child is taught astronomy, he understands it better if he is taught the geocentric first, but when he comes to finer points, the heliocentric will be necessary, to make him understand it better. So dualism is natural to those who are bound by the senses, they are bound thus to accept God who is Personal by nature, and nothing but Personal, and bound to see the world as composed of dualties ; Rámánuja says that so long as one thinks that he has a body and a mind, so long as he thinks himself to be a *jiva*, one with all the properties of a finite being, every act of perception of his, will have for its basis the three, the soul and nature and something as causing both of them. But yet, at the same time, it is true that there are conditions in which the idea of the body disappears, the mind becomes finer and finer till it almost disappears, when all the different things that make us fear, make us weak, and bind us down to this body-life disappear. And it is then and then alone that one finds out the truth of that grand old saying—"Even in this life they have conquered heaven, whose minds are firm fixed on this sameness of everything, for God is pure and the same to all ; and therefore, such are said to be living in God. Thus seeing the Lord as same everywhere, he, the sage, does not hurt the self by the self, and so goes to the highest goal."

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## THE THEME OF THE HIMALAYAS.

( REPLY TO THE ADDRESS AT ALMORA. )

**Himalayas,  
the goal of  
aspiring  
souls, the  
birth place  
of philosophy.**

This is the land of dreams of our forefathers, in which was born Párvati, the mother of India. This is the holy land where every ardent soul in India wants to come to at the end of his life, to close the last chapter of his mortal career. There, on the tops of the mountains of this blessed land, in the depths of its caves, on the banks of its rushing torrents, have been thought out the most wonderful thoughts, a little bit of which has drawn so much admiration even from foreigners, and have been pronounced by the most competent of judges to be incomparable. This is the land, which, since my very childhood, I have been dreaming of, to pass my life in. As all of you are aware, I have attempted again and again to live here for ever, and, because the time was not ripe, and I had work to do, I was whirled away out of this holy place. Yet it is the hope of my life to end my days here somewhere, in the lap of this father of mountains, where Rishis lived, and where philosophy was born. Perhaps, my friends, however I might wish, that silence and obscurity that were my object once should not now be given to me, to have them in the same ways as before. Yet I sincerely pray and hope, and almost believe, my last days will be here

of all places on earth. Inhabitants of this holy land, accept my gratitude for the kind praise that has fallen from you for my very little work in the West. But, at the same time, I must tell you that I am not in the mood at present to speak of work that has been done in the West or that which should be done in the East. For, as peak after peak of this father of mountains begins to appear before my sight, all propensities to work, the ferment that has been going on in my brain for years, quiet down, and instead of talking about what has been done, and what is going to be done, my mind reverts to that one eternal theme which the Himalayas always teach us, the theme which is reverberating in the very atmosphere of the place, the theme which I hear even now in the rushing whirlpools of its rivers—renunciation. “Everything in this life is fraught with fear. It is renunciation that makes one fearless.”\* Yes, this is the land of renunciation. The time will not permit me, and the circumstances are not suitable at present, to speak to you more fully. I shall have to conclude, therefore, by pointing out to you that these Himalayas stand as witnesses to that renunciation. And the grand lesson we shall ever teach to humanity will be that. As our forefathers used to be attracted towards it in the latter days of their lives, so, strong and spiritually minded souls from all quarters of this earth, in time to come, will be attracted to this father of mountains,

It teaches  
Renuncia-  
tion.

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\* “सर्वं वस्तु भवान्वितं भुवि दृष्ट्वा देवाग्यमेवामयं”



when all this fight between sects, differences, dogmas, and quarrels between your religion and my religion having vanished for ever, mankind will understand that there is but one eternal religion, and that is the perception of the Divine within, and that the rest is mere froth. Such ardent souls will then come here knowing that the world is but vanity of vanities, knowing that everything is useless except the worship of the Lord and the Lord alone. Friends, you have been very kind to allude to one idea. I have it yet in my brain, to start a centre in the Himalayas—and perhaps I have sufficiently explained myself why it should be so, why, above all, this is the spot which I want to select as one of the great centres to teach this universal religion from. These mountains are associated with the best memories of our race, and if these Himalayas are taken away from the history of religious India, there will be very little left of it behind. Here, therefore, must be one of those centres, not merely of activity, but of calmness, of meditation, and of peace, and I hope some day to realise it. I hope also to meet you at other times, and have better opportunities of talking to you. For the present let me thank you again for all the kindness that has been shown to me, and let me take it not as kindness shown to me in person, but as respect and Sraddha shown to our religion, which may never leave our hearts. May we always remain as pure as we are at the present moment, and as enthusiastic for spirituality always, as we are just now.

## THE COMMON BASES OF HINDUISM.

( ADDRESS DELIVERED AT LAHORE. )

This is the land which is held to be the holiest even in holy Aryávarta ; this is the Brahmávarta of which our great Manu speaks. This is the land from whence arose that mighty aspiration after the spirit, aye, which in times to come, as history shows, must deluge the world. This is the land where, like its mighty rivers, spiritual aspirations have arisen and joined their strength till they have travelled over the length and breadth of the world and declared themselves with a voice of thunder. This is the land which had first to bear the brunt of all inroads and invasions into India ; this heroic land had first to bare its bosom to all the incursions of outer barbarians into Aryávarta. This is the land which, after all its sufferings, has not yet entirely lost its glory and its strength. Here it was that in later times the mild Nának preached his marvellous love for the world. Here it was that his broad heart opened and his arms were outstretched to embrace the whole Indian world, not only the Hindus, but the Mohammedans too. Here it was that one of the last and one of the most glorious of the heroes of our race, Guru Govind Singh, shed his own blood, and that of his nearest and dearest, for the cause of religion. And when deserted by those

Holy land  
of the  
Aryans.

for whom this blood was shed, he,—the wounded lion,—struck to the core of his heart, retired into the South to die, without a word of curse on his country ; he disappeared without a single word of murmur even. Here in this ancient land of ours, children of the land of five rivers, I stand before you, not as a teacher—for I know very little to teach, but as one who has come from the East of India to exchange words of greeting and to compare notes with his brothers of the Western part of it. Here I am, not to find out differences that exist among us, but to find where we agree. Here I am, trying to understand on what ground we may always remain brothers, upon what foundations the voice of the Rishis that has spoken to us from eternity will grow in volume and become stronger and stronger. Here I am to propose unto you something of constructive work and not destructive. For criticism the days are past, and we are waiting for constructive work. The world needs, at times, criticisms, even fierce ones ; but that is only for a time and the work for all times, for eternity, is progress, through construction, and not criticism and destruction. For the last hundred years or so there has been a flood of criticism all over this land of ours, and the full play of Western Science has been let loose upon all its dark spots, that has made the corners and the holes appear much more prominent than what is there of good in it. Naturally enough, there arose mighty intellects, all over the land, great and glorious, with love of truth and justice,

with the love of their country, and above all, with intense love for their religion and their God in their hearts ; and because these mighty souls felt so deeply, because they loved so deeply, they criticised everything they thought was wrong. Glory unto these mighty spirits of the past ; they have done so much good ; but the voice of the present day is coming, telling us, "enough" ; there has been enough of criticism, there has been enough of fault finding, the time has come for the rebuilding, the reconstructing, the time has come for us to gather all our scattered forces, to concentrate them into one focus, and through that to lead the nation on in its onward march, which for centuries almost has stopped. The house has been cleansed ; let it be inhabited anew. The road has been cleared : march ahead, children of the Aryas.

Gentlemen, this is the motive that brings me before you and, at the start, I may declare to you that I belong to no party and no sect. They are all great and glorious to me, I love them all, and all my life I have been attempting to find what is good and true in them. Therefore it is my proposal to-night to bring before you points where we all agree, to find out, if we can, a ground of agreement ; and if through the grace of the Lord such be possible let us take it up, and from theory, bring that out into practice. We are Hindus. I do not use the word Hindu in any bad sense at all, nor do I agree with those that think there is any bad meaning to it. In olden

His object is to find out points of agreement among different sects.

times it simply meant people who lived on the other side of the Indus, to-day, a good many who hate us, may have put a bad interpretation on it, but names are nothing. Upon us depends whether the name Hindu will stand for everything that is glorious, everything that is spiritual, or whether it will remain a name of opprobrium, one designating the down-trodden, the worthless, the unbelieving heathen. If at present the word Hindu means anything bad, never mind, by our action let us be ready to show that this is the highest word that any language can invent. It has been one of the principles of my life not to be ashamed of my own ancestors. I am one of the proudest men ever born, but let me tell you frankly it is not for myself, but on account of my ancestry that I am so proud. The more I study the past and look back upon it, the more that pride comes to me ; and it has given me strength and courage of conviction, raised me up from the dust of the earth and set me working out that great plan which has been laid out by those great ancestors of ours. Children of those ancient Aryans, through the grace of the Lord, may you have the same pride, may that faith in your ancestors come into your blood, may it become part and parcel of your lives, may it work towards the salvation of the world through you.

Gentlemen, before trying to find out the precise points where we are all agreed, the common ground of our national life, one thing we must remember. Just as there is an individuality in every man, so

there is a national individuality. As one man differs from another in certain particulars, in certain characteristics of his own, so one race differs from another in certain other characteristics, and just as it is the mission of every man to fulfil a certain purpose in nature, just by moving along a particular line set out for him by his own past *Karma*, so it is with nations ; each nation has a destiny to fulfil, each nation has a message to deliver, each nation has a mission to accomplish. Therefore, from the very start, we must have to understand the mission of our own race, the destiny it has to fulfil, the place it has got to occupy in the march of nations, the note which it has to contribute unto the harmony of races. In our country, as children, we hear stories how that some serpents have jewels in their heads, and whatever one may do with a serpent, so long as the jewel is there, the serpent cannot be killed. We hear stories of giants and ogres which had souls living in certain little birds, and so long as those birds were safe, there was no power on earth to kill those giants, even if one hacked them to pieces. So with nations, there is a certain point where the life of a nation is centred, where the nationality of that nation exists, and until that is touched that nation cannot die. In the light of this we can understand the most marvellous phenomenon that the history of the world has ever known. Wave after wave of barbarian conquest has rolled over this devoted land of ours, "Allah Ho Akbar" has rent the skies for hundreds of years, and nobody knew

Religion  
—our  
national  
individuality.

which moment would be his last ; and yet here, on this land, the most suffering and the most subjugated one of all the historic lands of the world, we stand practically the same race as of old, ready to face difficulties again. And not only so, that we are strong again, but of late, the signs are that we are ready to go out and expand, and this expansion is a sign of life. We find to-day that our ideas and thoughts are no more cooped up within the bounds of this India of ours, and, whether we will it or not, they are spreading outside, filtering into the literature of nations, taking their place among nations, and in some even getting a commanding, a dictatorial position.\* Behind this we find the explanation that the contribution to the sum-total of the world's progress by India is its philosophy and spirituality, the sublimest themes that can occupy the mind of men. Our ancestors tried many other things ; they, like all the rest of mankind, first went to bring out the secrets of external Nature, as we all know, and with their gigantic brains, that marvellous race could have done miracles in that line ; but they gave it up for something higher, something better, something of which the Vedas say—"That science is the greatest which makes us know Him who never changes." The science of this nature, which is changeful, and evanescent, which has created the world of death, of woe, of misery, may be great, very great indeed ; but the science of Him who changes not, the Blissful One, in whom alone is peace, perfection and life eternal, and by attaining unto

whom all our misery cease, was according to our ancestors the sublimest science of all. After all sciences that can give us only bread and clothes and power over our fellowmen, sciences that can only teach us how to conquer our fellow-beings and to rule over them, which teach the strong to domineer over the weak, they could have discovered, but they gave those up. And praise be unto the Lord, they went in for that other science instead, which is grander, infinitely higher, infinitely more blissful, and held fast to that so that it has become our national characteristic, has come down unto us, inherited from father to son for thousands of years, till it has become part and parcel of us, tingling in every drop of blood that runs through our veins and has, as it were, become our very second nature. And thus it is that the words, religion and Hindu have become one in implication. That is our national characteristic, and that should not be touched. Barbarians with sword and fire, and with barbarous religions in their wake, could not, even one of them, touch that centre of our national life, not one of them could touch the jewel, the crest of the nation, not one of them had the power to kill the bird in whose body the soul of the race was lodged. There lies the vitality of the race, and so long as that remains, there is no power under the sun that can kill it. All the tortures or the miseries of the world will pass over us without hurting us; and we shall come out of the flames like Prahlád so long as we hold on to this grandest of all our inheri-



tances, spirituality. If a Hindu is not spiritual I do not call him a Hindu. In other countries a man may be political first, and then he may have a little religion, but here in India the first and the foremost duty of all of us is to be spiritual first, and then, if we have time, we should let other things come. Bearing this in mind, we shall be in a better position to understand why, for our national welfare, we must first seek out all the spiritual forces of the race. We did that in the days of yore, and we shall have to do the same at the present day, as well as in the future ; and national union in India must be a gathering up of the scattered spiritual forces in the land. A nation in India must be a union of those whose hearts beat the same spiritual tune.

Sects must  
exist but  
sectarianism  
is bad.

Gentlemen, there have been sects enough in this country. There are sects enough, and there will be enough in the future, because this has been the peculiarity of our religion, that, in abstract principles, much latitude has been given to work out details. And such details have been worked out afterwards from those principles, which are broad as the skies above our heads and eternal as nature herself. Sects, therefore, as a matter of course, must exist here, but what need not exist is sectarian quarrel. Sects must be, but sectarianism need not. The world would not be the better for sectarianism, but the world cannot move on without having sects. For, as one man cannot do everything, so the almost infinite mass of spiritual energy cannot be managed by a small number

of people composing a sect. Here at once we see the necessity that forced this division of labour upon us—the division into sects. For the use of spiritual forces let sects be there, but is there any need, therefore, that they should quarrel—when our most ancient books declare that this differentiation is only apparent, that in spite of all these differences there is a thread of harmony, a beautiful unity, running through them all? Our most ancient books have declared: *Ekam sat viprá bahudhá vadanti*. “That which exists is one; sages call Him by various names.” Therefore, if there still persist these sectarian struggles, if there are still these fights among the different sects, if there is still a jealousy and hatred between the different sects, yes, even in India, the land where all sects have always been honoured, it would be a shame on us who dare call ourselves the descendants of those fathers.

Gentlemen, there are certain great principles in which, I think, we are all one. Whether Vaishnavite, Saivite, Sáкта or Gánapatya, whether belonging to the ancient school of Vedántists, or the modern ones, whether belonging to the old rigid sects, or the modern reformed ones—whoso calls himself a Hindu, he, in my opinion, must believe in certain principles. Of course there is a difference in the interpretation, in the explanation, of these principles, by different sects. That difference should be there, and that should be allowed. For we are not to bind every man down to our own view point; that would be

Points of  
agreement  
among  
Indian sects.

**1. Believing  
in the  
Vedas.**

a sin, to force every man to accept our own methods and our own interpretation of things. Gentlemen, perhaps all of us who are here will agree on the first point, that, we all believe the Vedas to be the eternal teachings of the mysteries of Religion. We all believe that the wisdom contained in them is sacred and without beginning and end. We believe them to be coeval with nature, which is also without beginning and without end. And all our religious differences, all our religious struggles must end by referring ultimately to the teachings of these holy scriptures for we are all agreed that these constitute the last court of appeal in all our spiritual differences. We may have different points of view as to what the Vedas are. There may be one sect which takes up one portion as more sacred than another, but that matters little so long as we say that we are all believers in the Vedas, and hold that it is out of those venerable, eternal, marvellous books, that has come everything that we possess to-day, good, holy, and pure. Therefore, if we believe in it, let that be preached, first of all, broadcast throughout the length and breadth of the land. If that be true, let the Vedas have that prominence which it always deserves, and which we all believe in.

**2. Believ-  
ing in God.**

The second point we all believe in, is God, a creating and a preserving power of the universe, unto whom the whole universe periodically returns, to come out at other periods and manifest that wonderful phenomenon called creation. We may

differ as to our conceptions of God. One may believe in a God who is entirely Personal, another may believe in a God who is Personal and yet not human, and still another may believe in a God who is entirely Impersonal. Yet all these get their support from the Vedas. And in spite of those differences of opinion, we are all believers in God ; that is to say, that man who does not believe in that most marvellous infinite power, from which everything has come, in which everything lives, and to which everything must in the end return, cannot be called a Hindu. If that be so, let us try to preach that idea also, broadcast, over the length and breadth of the land. Preach whatever conception of God you have to give, but do not fight over differences in your ideas of Him. That is what we want at present. One idea of God may be better than another, but, mind you, not one of those is bad. One may be good, another better, and another the best of all, but the word bad does not enter the category of Godhead in our religion. Therefore the Lord bless them all who preach the name of Him in whatever form they like. The more He is preached, the better for the race. Let our children be brought up in the principle that all ideas of God are holy and let that idea enter the homes of the poorest and the lowest as well as of the richest and the highest, the idea of God.

Gentlemen, the third point that I will present before you is, the world. We do not believe that this world was created only so many thousand years ago

3. In Nature and soul, being eternal.

and that it is going to be destroyed eternally on a certain day ; and in this we are different from all the other races of the world. Nor do we believe in the fact that the human soul has been created along with this universe just out of nothing. Here is another point I think we are all agreed upon. We believe in nature being without beginning and without end ; only at certain psychological periods this gross material of the outer universe goes back to its finer state, again to be projected outside, to manifest all this infinite panorama we call nature ; and this wave-like motion is going on through eternity even before time began, and will be going on for an infinite period of time to come. The next point in which all Hindus believe is, that man is not only a gross material body and not only that within this there is the finer body of the mind, but that there is something yet greater in him, beyond it. For the body changes, so does the mind, but that something beyond, which is the *Atman* of man, I cannot translate the word to you, for, any translation will be wrong, has neither beginning nor end, nor knows what death is, and can therefore have no change. And there is this idea among us which is peculiarly different from the ideas of all other races of men, that this *Atman* inhabits body after body until there is no more interest for it to inhabit any kind of

\* body whatsoever, and then it becomes free, and is not born again. I refer to the theory of *Samsāra* and the theory of the Soul Eternal of our *Sāstras*. This here is another point where we all agree, whatever sect we

may belong to. There may be differences of opinion among us as to the relation between this soul and God. According to one sect, this soul is eternally different from God, according to others, it is a spark of that infinite fire, according to still others, it is one with that Infinite. It does not matter what our interpretation is, but so long as we hold on to the one basic belief that the soul is infinite, that the soul is never created, and therefore will never die, that it has to pass through various bodies, till it attains perfection in the human body—we are all agreed. And then comes that most differentiating element in us, from all other races, the grandest and the most wonderful discovery in the realms of spirituality that has ever been made. Some of those among you, who have been studying Western thought have marked it already that there is another radical difference which separates the Eastern from the all that is among the Western races. It is this, that whether we are Sāktas or Sauras, whether we are Vaishnavites, or Saivas, even whether we are Bauddhas or Jainas, we all hold in India that the soul is by its nature, pure and perfect, infinite in power and blessed. Only, according to the Dualist, this natural blissfulness of the soul has become contracted by past bad work, and through the grace of God is again going to open out and show its perfection; while according to the Monist, even this idea of contraction is a mistake, and it is the veil of *Māyā* that causes us to think the soul has lost its powers, while the powers are there all the time. Whatever

Soul, pure,  
perfect and  
blissful by  
nature.

the differences may be among us, when we come to consider the centre of all our belief in which we all agree, we find at once that there is a fundamental difference in the methods of the East and the West. The Eastern is ever looking inward for all that is great and good. When we worship, we close our eyes and try to find God within, while the Western is looking up outside for his God. The Westerns hold that their religious books have been produced by inspiration from an outside agency, while we hold that our sacred books are the result of inspiration from within. We hold them to be the breath of God, and that they have been expired, breath-like, out of Him, Who resides in the hearts of sages or *Mantra-drashtās*, who manifested them before us. This is a great point to understand, and my friends, my brethren, let me tell you this is the one point which we shall have to stand upon in our interpretation of religion in the future. For I am firmly convinced, and I beg you to understand the fact, that no good comes out of the man who day and night looks for help from outside and thinks he is nobody. If a man thinks constantly that he is low, miserable, and good for nothing, so he becomes. And if a man thinks that he has infinite power within, that power shall be his and most marvellous will be its result. That is the great fact which you ought to remember. We are the children of the Almighty, we are like sparks of that fire of the Infinite Divine. How can we be nothing? We have power to do and must do everything. Such faith in

themselves was in the hearts of our ancestors, such faith in themselves was the motive power that pushed them forward and forward in the march of civilisation. And mark my words, if there has been degradation and degeneration, it must have set forth from that day when our people lost that faith in themselves. Losing faith in one's self means losing faith in God. Do you believe in that Infinite, good Providence working in and through you? If you believe that this Omnipresent One, the *Antaryamin* is present, in every atom of you, *Ota-prola*, as the Sanskrit word goes, penetrating your body, mind and soul through and through, how can you lose hearts? I may be a little bubble of water, and you may be a mountain high wave ; never mind, the Infinite ocean is the back-ground of me as well as of you. Mine is also that infinite ocean of life, of power, of spirituality, as well as it is yours. I am already joined, from my very birth, from the very fact of my life—in Yoga with that infinite life, and infinite goodness, and infinite power, as you are. Therefore my brethren, teach this life-saving, ennobling, great, grand doctrine to your children, even from their very birth. You need not teach them Advaitism ; teach them Dvaitism, or any 'ism' you please, but we have seen that this marvellous doctrine of the perfection of the Soul is believed in by all, throughout India. As says our great philosopher Kapila, if purity has not been the nature of the soul, from the very beginning, it can never attain purity afterwards, for anything that is



not perfect by nature originally can never be perfect eventually. If impurity is the nature of man, then man will have to remain impure, even though he may appear to be pure for five minutes. The time will come when that purity in him, will wash out, pass away, and the old natural impurity have its sway once more. Therefore, say all our philosophers, good is our nature, perfection is our nature, and not impurity, not imperfection—remember that. Remember the beautiful example of that great sage, who, when he was dying, asked his mind to remember all his mighty deeds and all his mighty thoughts and not his weaknesses and his follies. Aye, follies there are, weakness there must be ; but remember your real nature always, for that is the only way to cure the weakness, that is the only way to cure the follies.

Religion is  
Realisation.

Gentlemen, it seems that these few religious points are common among all the various sects in India, and upon this common platform, conservative and liberal religionists, the old type and the new, may shake hands. And, above all, there is one other thing which we should remember, always, and I am sorry we forget it from time to time, that religion means realisation in India and nothing short of that. "Believe in the doctrine and you are safe," can never be our motto, for we do not believe in such a thing. You are what you make yourselves. You will be that what you will make of yourselves by the grace of God and your own exertions. Mere believing in certain theories and doctrines will not help you much.

The mighty word that resounds above all in the spiritual firmament of India is *Anubhuti*, realisation, and ours are the only scriptures which declare again and again, that the Lord has to be seen. Bold, brave words indeed, are these ; but true to their core, every bit of them. Religion is to be realised, not heard of only. It is not contained in learning doctrines only like a parrot. It is not intellectual assent only ; that is nothing. But it must come into us through realisation. Therefore the greatest proof that we have of the existence of a God is not that our reason says so and so, but that God has been seen by the ancients as well as by the moderns. We believe in the soul not only because there are good reasons to prove its existence, but, because, there have been persons in India, by the thousand, in the days of yore, and there are, and will be many such in the future, who will realise and see their own souls. And there is no salvation for man until he sees God and realises his own soul. Therefore, above all, let us understand that, it is only that man who has realised God, and seen Him, who is really religious. And the more we understand it the less we shall have of sectarianism in India. And it is of the really religious that our scriptures say, that those who have seen Him, who is nearest of the near and the farthest of the far, have the knots of their heart cut asunder, have all their doubts subsided for ever and so made free from the fruits of their actions. Aye, we often mistake mere prattle for religion, mere intellectual perorations for

great spiritual realisation, and then comes sectarianism, and then comes fight. But once we understand that in this realisation only is religion, we shall begin to look into our own hearts and find how far we are towards realising the truths of religion ; we shall understand then that we ourselves are groping in darkness and are leading others to grope in darkness likewise, and then shall we stop from sectarianism, quarrel and fight. Ask a man who wants to start a sectarian fight, "Have you seen God ? Have you seen the *Atman* ? If you have not, what right have you to preach His name, you who are walking in darkness yourself and trying to lead me into the same darkness,—the blind leading the blind, and both falling into the ditch ?" Therefore, take more thought before you go and find fault with others. Struggle first to realise yourself, then lead others through the same path to realisation. Let all people struggle to see truth in their own hearts, and as the broad, naked truth will be seen, they will find that wonderful blissfulness which in a manner marvellous enough has been testified to by every seer in India, by everyone in fact, who has realised the truth anywhere else. Then words of love alone will come out of the heart, for it has been touched by Him who is the essence of Love Himself. Then and then alone will all sectarian quarrels cease amongst us, and make the word Hindu to stand for every thing that is spiritual and glorious ; and we shall embrace every one who bears the name Hindu with intense love. Mark me, then and then.

alone you are a Hindu, when the very mention of the name shall send in you a galvanic shock of spirituality ; then and then alone you are a Hindu, when every man who bears the name, in any part of the world, speaking any language whatsoever, becomes nearest and dearest to you at once. Then and then alone you are a Hindu, when the distress of anyone bearing that name will come to your heart and make you feel as if your own son were in distress. Then and then alone you are a Hindu when you will be ready to bear all unkindness at the hands of your own people without a word of curse like your great Guru Govind Singh, regarding whom I have spoken to you at the beginning of this lecture. Mark me, every one of you must have to be a Govind Singh, if you want to do good to your country. You will have to worship all who have the Hindu blood, even if you see thousands of defects in them and even when they do everything to hurt you. You must have words of love only for them even if they curse you and must retire in silence to die, even like that mighty lion, Guru Govind Singh, if they drive you out. Such a **Spirituality and love make the true Hindu.** man is worthy of the name of Hindu ; such an ideal ought to be before us always. Let us bury all our hatchets and send out a grand current of love all round. Let others talk of India's regeneration as they like ; but allow me to tell you as one who has been working all his life for it, that there is no regeneration for India until you become spiritual and love one another with your whole heart. Upon that

depends the welfare not only of yourself, but of the whole world. For I must tell you frankly that the very foundations of Western civilisation have been shaken to their base by materialism which declares man to be nothing but matter. Nation after nation has arisen in the past and has based its greatness upon such materialism. But the mightiest of buildings, built upon loose and sand foundations, must come to grief one day, must totter to its destruction some day. The history of the world is our witness for it. All such civilisations, as have been based upon such sand foundations, as material comfort and all that, have disappeared one after the other, after short lives, from the face of the world, while the civilisation of India and such other nations as have stood at the feet of India to listen and learn of spirituality, namely, Japan and China, live even to the present day, and there are signs even of revival among them. Their lives are like that of the phoenix, destroyed a thousand times, yet ready to spring up glorious once more. But a materialistic civilisation once dashed down, can never come up ; that building once thrown down, is broken into pieces. Therefore have patience and wait, glorious life is in store for us in the future.

Do not be in a hurry, do not go out to imitate anybody else. This is another great lesson we have to remember ; imitation is not civilisation. I may deck myself out in a Raja's dress ; will that make me a Raja ? An ass in a lion's skin never makes a lion. Imitation, cowardly imitation, never makes for pro-

gress. At the same time, it is the very sign of awful degradation in a man. Aye, when a man has begun to hate himself, then the last blow has come. When a man has begun to be ashamed of his ancestors, the end has come. Here am I, one of the least of the Hindu race, yet proud of my race, proud of my ancestors. I am proud to call myself a Hindu. I am proud that I am one of your unworthy servants. I am proud that I am a countryman of yours, you the descendants of the sages, you the descendants of the most glorious ancestors the world ever saw. Therefore have faith in yourselves, be proud of your ancestors, instead of being ashamed of them. And do not imitate ; do not imitate. Whenever you are under the thumb of others, you lose your own independence. If you always work, even in spiritual things, under the dictation of others, slowly you lose all faculty even of thought. Bring out through your own exertions what you have, but do not imitate ; yet take what is good from others. We have to learn from others, but to grow even as the seed ; you put the seed in the ground, give it plenty of earth, and air, and water to feed upon and the seed grows into a plant, and even into a gigantic tree. Does it become the earth, does it become the air, or does it become the water ? It becomes a mighty plant, or a mighty tree, after its own nature, having absorbed everything that was given to it. Let that be your position. We have indeed many things to learn from others, nay, that man who refuses to learn so, is already dead ; our Manu

Have faith  
in your-  
selves.

Do not  
imitate  
others

declares: "Learn good knowledge by serving even the man of low birth, and from the Chandála even learn the way to salvation by serving." Learn every thing that is good from others, but absorb it in your own way and do not try to become others. Do not indeed throw off you own national mode of life; do not for a moment think that it would be better for India if all the Indians were dressing, eating, behaving, and doing other things like any other people. Aye, you know the difficulty of giving up a habit of a few years and the Lord knows for how many thousands of years this habit of flowing in with this national life in one particular direction has grown into your blood. Do you mean to say that the mighty stream, which has nearly reached the ocean, will have to go back to the snows of the Himalayas again? That is impossible! The struggle to give up this habit would only break you. Therefore make way for the life-current of the nation. Take off the blocks that bar the way of progress of this mighty river, cleanse its path, clear its channel, and out it will rush by its own natural impulse, and the nation will go on careering and progressing.

Gentlemen, these are the lines which I beg to suggest to you for spiritual work in India. There are many other great problems which, for want of time, I cannot bring before you this night. For instance, there is the wonderful question of caste. I have been studying this question *pros* and *cons*, all my life. I have studied it in nearly every province in India. I

have mixed with people of all castes nearly in every part of the country, and I have become bewildered to grasp the significance of it, the more I have tried to do it. But at last I have found a little glimmer of light before me and have begun to feel its significance. Then there is the great problem about eating and drinking. That is a great problem indeed. It is not so useless a thing as we generally think now-a-days, and curiously enough, I have come to the conclusion that what we now insist upon observing about them are against what the Sástras enjoin us to do. And we have come to grief by neglecting to observe proper purity in these respects.

There are several other questions which I want to bring before you and show how these problems can be solved, but unfortunately, it is getting very late now. I will therefore keep my ideas about caste and other things for a future occasion.

Now gentlemen, one word more and I will finish my discourse on these spiritual ideas. Religion for long has become statical in India, what we want now is to make it dynamical. I want it to be brought into the practical life of everybody. Religion, as it always has been in the past, must enter the palaces of kings as well as the homes of the poorest peasants in the land. Religion, the common inheritance, the universal birthright of the race, must be brought free to the door of everybody. Religion in India must be made as free and as easy of access as God's air is. And this is the kind of work we have to

Dynamical religion is what India wants at present.



**Have faith  
in men.**

work out in India, but not by getting up little sects and fighting on our differences. I beg to suggest, let us preach to everyone the points where we all agree and leave out the differences to remedy themselves. As I have said again and again, if for centuries there is darkness in a room, and we on entering begin to cry, "Oh it is dark," and "oh it is dark," will the darkness go? Bring in the light and the darkness will vanish instantly. This is the secret of reforming men. Suggest to them higher things. But first believe yourselves in the innate goodness of man. Do not start with the belief that man is degraded and degenerated. I have never failed in any case in my faith in man, even at his worst. He has triumphed and has come out bright at last wherever I have put my faith in man. Therefore have faith in man even if he appears to you to be a very learned one or a most ignorant one. Have faith in man, whether he appears to be an angel or the very devil himself. Have faith in man first, and then believe that if there are defects in him, if he makes mistakes, if he embraces the crudest and the vilest doctrines, it is not because of his badness of nature, but from want of higher ideals. If a man goes towards what is false, it is because he cannot get what is true. Therefore the only method of correcting what is false in him is by supplying him with what is true. Do this, and let him compare. You give him the truth, and there your work is done. Let him compare that in his own mind with what he has already ; and, mark my words, if you have really

given him the truth, that which is false must vanish, light must dispel darkness and truth will bring the good out of him. This is the way, if you want to reform the country spiritually, this is the way, and not fighting people and telling them that what they are doing is bad. Put the good before them and see how eagerly they take it, how the Divine that never dies and is always living in the human, comes up awakened and stretches out Its hand for all that is good and all that is glorious.

May He who is the Creator, the Preserver and the Protector of our race, the God of our forefathers, whether called by the name of Vishnu, or Siva, or Sakti, or Ganapati, whether worshipped as *Savikara* or as *Nirvikara*, whether He is worshipped as Personal, or Impersonal, may He whom our fathers knew and addressed by the words—*Ekam sat vipra bahudha vadanti*, "That one exists whom the sages call by various names"—may He enter into us with His mighty love, may He shower His blessings on us, may He make us understand one another, may He make us work for one another with real love, with intense love for truth, and may not the least desire for our own personal fame, our own personal prestige, our own personal advantage, enter into this, our great work of spiritual regeneration of India.

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## THE VEDANTA.

( SECOND ADDRESS DELIVERED AT LAHORE. )

The search  
for the in-  
finite began  
in the  
external  
world.

Two worlds there are in which we live, one the external, the other the internal. Human progress has lain, from times of yore, almost in parallel lines along both these worlds. The search began in the external, and man at first wanted to get answers for all the deep problems from outside nature. Man wanted to satisfy his thirst for the beautiful and the sublime from all that surrounded him ; man wanted to express himself and all that was within him, in the language of the concrete ; and grand and sublime were the answers, most marvellous the ideas of God and worship, most rapturous the expressions of the beautiful, that came from the external world indeed. But the introspective investigation, opening out for humanity later, laid out before him a universe yet sublimer, yet more beautiful and infinitely more expansive. In the *Karmakānda* portion of the Vedas, we find the most wonderful ideas of religion inculcated, we find the most wonderful ideas about an over-ruling Creator, Preserver and Destroyer, and the universe presented before us in language sometimes the most soul-stirring. Most of you perhaps remember that most wonderful *sloka* in the Rig Veda Samhita, where you get the description of chaos, which is perhaps the sublimest

that has ever been attempted yet. Yet we find in it only a painting of the sublime from outside, we find it to be gross, we find that something of matter yet clings on to it. In spite of its sublimity it is only the expression of the Infinite in the language of matter, in the language of the finite. It is the infinite of the external and not of the internal world. It is the infinite of space and not of thought. Therefore in the second portion, or *Jñāna-kānda*, we find altogether a different procedure. First it was to get the solution of all the deep problems of life from external nature, from the material world: *Yasyaite Himavanto mahitwa*, "Whose glory these Himalayas declare." That is a grand idea, but that was not grand enough for India. The Indian mind had to fall back from this line and its search after truth took a different direction altogether from the external; it went into the internal, from matter into the mind. There arose the cry, "when a man dies, what becomes of him?" *Astityeke nāyamastiti chaitke*, &c. "Some say that he exists, others that he is gone; say, Oh king of Death, what is the truth?" An entirely different procedure we find here in the Vedas. The Indian mind got what was to be got from the external world, but it did not feel satisfied with that; it wanted to go farther, to dig into its own interior, to find from its own soul the answer to that problem. And the name of that portion of the Vedas, which records the search along the internal line is, the Upanishads, the

It culminated in the highest spirituality of the Upanishads.

Vedānta, the Aranyakas, or the *Rahasya*. In it we find that religion has got rid of all external formalities entirely. In it we find that spiritual things are not told in the language of matter, but in the language of the spirit itself. No more is there any grossness attached to it, no more is there in it any compromise of the spiritual with things external. Bold, brave, beyond all limited conceptions of the present day, stand the giant minds of the sages of the Upanishads, declaring the noblest truths of the spirit that have ever been preached unto humanity, without any compromise, without any fear. These my countrymen, I want to lay before you to-day as far as possible, for the *Jñāna-kānda* of the Vedas is a vast ocean indeed and many lives are necessary to understand it thoroughly. Truly has it been said of the Upanishads by Rāmānuja that they form the head, and the shoulders, of the Vedas, and surely enough they are the Scriptures of modern India. The Hindus have great respect for the *Karma-kānda* of the Vedas, but we all know that for all practical purposes, the word *Sruti* has been used by them for ages to mean the Upanishads and the Upanishads alone. We all know the fact that all our great Philosophers, Vyāsa, or Patanjali, Gautama, or even the great father of all philosophy, Kapila himself, wherever they wanted an authority for what they wrote, they went to the Upanishads for that, and nowhere else, for therein are truths that are eternal.

There are truths that are true only, under certain circumstances and for certain times, there are other

truths that are based on the very nature of man himself, that must endure so long as man himself will endure. These latter are the truths that alone can be universal, and in spite of the changes that have come in India, as to our social surroundings, our methods of dress, our manner of eating, our modes of worship, these universal truths of the *Srutis*, these marvellous ideas of the Vedānta, stand in their own sublimity, immovable, unvanquishable, deathless, and immortal. Yet the germs of all the ideas that are developed in the Upanishads are to be found already in the *Karma-kānda*. As for instance, the idea of the cosmos, which all the schools of Vedānta teach, the psychology which forms the common basis of all Indian schools of thought, had all been worked out in the *Karma-kānda* and presented before the world. A few words, therefore, about it are necessary before we deal with the Vedānta proper or the Upanishads alone; and I want to explain one thing first, that is, the sense in which I am using the word Vedānta. Unfortunately there is an oft-repeated mistake committed about the word Vedānta in modern India; they say that it has reference only to the Advaita system of thought but you must always remember that in modern India there are the three *Prasthānas*, for a devotee to study. First of all, there are the revelations, by which I mean the Upanishads. Secondly, among our philosophies, the Sūtras of Vyāsa have got the greatest prominence, on account of their being the summation of all the preceding

The three  
Prasthanas.

1. Upanishads.

2. Vyasa  
sūtras.

systems of philosophy, on account of their showing not only that these systems are not contradictory to one another, but that they are based, one on the other, unfolding gradually the theme which culminates in them. Thirdly, between the Upanishads and the Sūtras,

3. The Gita. which are the systematising of the marvellous truths of the Vedānta, come in the divine commentary of the Vedānta, the Gitā. The Upanishads, the Gitā, and the Vyāsa Sūtras, therefore, have been taken up by every sect in India which wants to claim authority to be orthodox. No matter whether a sect be Dualist, or Visistadvaitist, or Advaitist, the authorities for each are those three. We find that a Sankarāchārya, or a Rāmānuja, or a Madhwācharya, or a Vallabhāchārya, or a Chaitanya,—any one who wanted to propound a new sect—had to take up these three Prasthanas and write only a new commentary on them. Therefore it would be wrong to confine the word Vedānta only to one system of thought which has arisen out of the Upanishads, for it covers all these systems of thought. The Dualist and the Visistadvaitist have as much right to be called a Vedāntist as the Advaitist ; in fact, it will not be wrong to say that what we really mean by the word Hindu is the word Vedāntist. One idea more I want you to note, that these three systems have been current in India almost from time immemorial. You must not believe that Sankara was the inventor of the Advaitist system ; it existed ages before Sankara was born ; he was one of its last representatives. So

Vedānta  
compre-  
hends these  
three  
systems.

was the Rámánujist system ; it existed ages before Rámántuja existed. This we already know by the commentaries they have written ; so all the other Dualistic systems have existed side by side with the former two and with my little knowledge I have come to the conclusion that they do not contradict one another. Just as in the case of the six *Darsanas* of ours, we find them to be a gradual unfolding of one grand theme, the music beginning in soft low notes, and ending in the triumphant blast of the Advaita, so also through these three systems of thought, the Dvaita, the Visistadvaita and the Advaita, we find the gradual working up of the human mind towards higher and higher ideals, till everything is merged in that wonderful unity which is reached in the Advaita system. Therefore these three are not contradictory. On the other hand I am bound to tell you that to hold them to be contradictory has been a mistake committed by not a few. We find Advaitist preachers keep entire those texts of the Upanishad which support only Advaitism, and get hold of the Dualistic or Qualified-dualistic texts, only to try to read their own meaning into them. In the same way we find Dualistic teachers leaving those passages off that are expressly Dualistic alone, and getting hold of Advaitic texts, trying to force them into a Dualistic meaning. They have been great men, our Gurus, yet even the faults of a Guru must be told. I am of opinion that they were mistaken in such a procedure. We need not go into text-torturing, we need not go into any

Advaita  
and Dvaita  
not contra-  
dictory.



The one is the development of the other in the search for the ultimate unity.


sort of religious dishonesty, we need not go into any sort of grammatical twaddle, we need not go about trying to put our own ideas into texts which were never meant to be there. But as soon as we understand the marvellous doctrine of *Adhikāravada*,† our work of reconciling those texts will be plain and easy. It is true that the Upanishads have one theme before them, "What is that knowing which we know everything else?"\* In modern language, the theme of the Upanishads, like the theme of every other system of knowledge, is to find an ultimate unity in things, for we find that knowledge is nothing but finding unity in the midst of diversity. Each science is based upon this ; all human knowledge is based upon the finding of unity in the midst of diversity. And if that be the process of acquiring knowledge in different departments of human life, which we call our sciences, namely, to find unity in the midst of a few groups of different phenomena, the task becomes stupendous, when the object before us is to find unity in the midst of this marvellously diversified universe in its totality, so different in names and forms. And to find such a unity in the universe of difference in matter and spirit, of things different in every respect, where each thought differs from every every other thought, each form differs from every other form, and where there

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† Religious privileges determined by and graded according to varied religious content and attainment in different individuals.

\* "कश्चिद् भगवो विद्वान् सर्वमिदं विद्वान् भवति ।"

are unending planes or *lokas* of existence, is the theme of the Upanishads. And that theme has been dealt with in the Upanishads in what is called the *Arundhati Nyaya* process. To show a man the Pole Star, through that process, his attention is drawn first to the star which is bigger and more brilliant than the Pole Star, but situated very near to it, and after he has seen that, gradually he is led to the Pole Star itself. Such has been the task of the Upanishads, and to prove my idea I have simply to take you through the different groups of texts in them. You will see in every one of them that nearly every chapter begins with Dualistic teaching, *upasana*. Later on, God is first taught as a Being, who is the Creator of this universe, its Preserver, and as One unto whom everything goes at last. He is one to be worshipped, as the Ruler, the Guide of Nature, both external and internal, and yet is as if He were something outside of nature and external to it. One step further, and we find the same Upanishads teaching that this God is not outside nature, but immanent in it. And at last both these aforesaid ideas are discarded and the Upanishads teach that whatever is real, is He. That immanent one is at last declared to be the same that is in the human soul, in the declaration, "Tat twamasi, Svetaketu"—"Svetaketu, Thou art that." And here there is no compromise ; no fear of other's opinions. Truth, bold truth, has been taught in bold language, and we need not fear to preach the truth in the same bold language. And by the grace of God I hope at



least to be the bold one who dares to be that bold preacher.

Cosmology  
of Ve-  
danta.

To go back to our preliminaries. First, there are two things to be understood, one, the psychological aspect, common to all the Vedantic schools, and the other, the cosmological aspect. To-day you find wonderful discoveries of modern science coming upon us like bolts from the blue, opening our eyes to marvels we had never dreamt of. Man has long since discovered that what he calls heat, or magnetism, or electricity, and so forth, are all convertible into one another, and as such, he calls all those expressions of one Energy, or whatever you call it. This has been done even in the Samhita. Hoary with age, as the Samhita is, is that very idea of force I was referring you to. All the forces, whether you call them gravitation, or attraction, or repulsion, expressing themselves whether as heat, or electricity, or magnetism, have to express themselves as thought, reflected from the *antahkarana*, the inner organ of man, and the unit from which they spring is what is called the *prana*. Again, what is *prana*? *Prana* is *spandana* or vibrations. When all this universe will have resolved itself back into its primal state, what will become of this infinite force, the *prana*? Would it become extinct? Of course not. If it became extinct what would be the cause of the next wave of *srishti*? According to our shastra this *srishti* is always moving on in wave forms, rising, and disappearing, rising again, and disappearing again. It will be

Prana.

wrong to translate the word *srishti* as creation. It is rather a projection out of that Infinite Being. During *Srishti*. the disappearance of *srishti* in the *pralaya* state, everything becomes finer and finer and is resolved back to the primal state from which it sprang, and there it remains for a time, quiescent, ready to spring forth again. And what becomes then of all these forces that are the manifestation of *prana*? They are resolved back into the primal *prana*, and this *prana* becomes almost motionless—not entirely motionless, but almost motionless—and that is what is described in the *sukta*, as “*anidavátam*,” “It vibrated without vibrations” etc. There are many texts in the Upanishads that are difficult to understand, especially those where technical phrases are used. As, for instance, the word *vatam* in the above text, which comes from *vayu*, air, many times it means air and many times motion, and often people confuse one with the other. We have to take care of such words and phrases as this. During *pralaya*, the *prana*, exists in that form. And *Akasa*. what becomes of what you call *akasa* or primal matter? The forces permeate all matter, so with them, they all dissolve into ether. And with them they come out again in the next rise of the wave of *srishti*, and the first to come out is *akasa*. Whether you translate this word as ether, or anything else, this is the idea, that this *akasa* is the primal form of matter. This *akasa*, then, vibrates under the action of *prana*, when the next *shruti* comes up, and as the vibration becomes quicker, the *akasa* is lashed into all

these material forms which we call the suns, and the moons, and the planetary systems.

This is the idea that we find in the text : “Prana vibrating, everything in this universe has been projected.”\* Mark the words, in the text, *ejati*, because it comes from *ija* to vibrate, and *Nissritam*, literally, is, projected, and *yadidam kincha* is—whatever is this universe. Now that is a part only of the cosmological side. Many details have been worked out into it. For instance, how the procedure takes place, how there is first ether, and how from the ether come other things, how that ether begins to vibrate, and from that *vayu* comes. The main idea in the above procedure is that it is from the finer that the grosser comes out. Gross matter is the last to come out and the most external, and this gross matter had the finer matter before it. Yet in the above cosmological argument we see that the whole thing has been resolved into two, and there is not yet any unity. There is the unity of force, *prana*, and there is the unity of matter called *akasa*. Is there still further a unity to be found among them? Can these be melted into one? Our modern science is mute here, and has not yet found its way out. And if it ever finds its way out, just as it has been slowly finding out this *prana* and this *akasa*, of the Upanishads, it will have to move to the same conclusion. For the next unity, the Upanishads say, is the omnipresent impersonal Being known by its old mythological name as *Brahma*, the four-headed

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\* “यदिह किञ्च जगत् सृज्ये प्राञ्च एकस्मिन् निःसृतम्”

*Brahma*, and psychologically called *mahat*. This is where the two unite. The ego mind is only a fragment of this *mahat*, caught in the trap of a brain, and the sum total of all these fragments manifesting through all brains is what is called the *samashti* mind or the universal mind. Analysis had to go further ; it was not yet complete. Here we are, each one of *Samashti*. us, as it were, a microcosm, and the world taken altogether is the macrocosm. But whatever is in the *vyashti*, or the individual, we may safely conjecture to be also in the *samashti* or the aggregate whole also. So if we had the power to analyse our own minds we might safely conjecture that the same thing is there also in the Cosmic mind. Now what is this mind, is the next question. In modern times, in Western countries, as physical science is making rapid progress, as physiology is step by step conquering all the strongholds of old religions, the Western people do not know where to stand, because to their great despair, modern physiology has at every step identified the mind with the brain. But we in India have known that always. That is the first proposition the Hindu boy learns, that the mind is matter, only finer. The body is gross, and behind the body is what we call the *sūkshma sarira*, the fine body or mind. This is also material, only finer ; and it is not the *ātman*. I will not translate this word to you in English, because the idea does not exist in Europe ; it is untranslatable. German philosophers of the modern times have attempted to translate the word

*Sūkshma  
Sarira or  
mind.*

*âtman* by the word 'self', but until that word is universally accepted it is impossible to use it. So, call it self or anything, it is our *âtman*. This *âtman* is the real man behind. It is the *âtman* that uses the material mind as its instrument, its *antahkarana*, the psychological term for the mind in our philosophy. And the mind by means of a series of internal organs or brain centres works the visible organs of the body. What is this mind? It was only the other day that Western philosophers have come to know that the eyes are not the real organs of vision, but that behind these are other organs, the *indriyas*, and if these are destroyed a man may have a thousand eyes, like Indra, but there will be no sight for him. Aye, our philosophy starts with this assumption, that by vision is not meant the external vision. The real vision belongs to the internal organs, the brain centres inside. You may call them what you like, but it is not that the *indriyas* are the eyes, or the nose or the ears. And the sum total of all these *indriyas* plus the *manas*, *buddhi*, *chitta*, *ahankâra*, is what is called the mind, and if the modern physiologist comes to tell you that the brain is what in other word called the mind and that the brain is the centre of so many organs, you need not be afraid at all ; tell him your philosophers knew it always ; it is the very alpha of your religion.

Well, then, we have to understand now what is meant by this *manas*, *buddhi*, *chitta* and *ahankara*. First of all let us take *chitta* ; it is the mind-stuff, a

part of the *mahat*—it is the generic name for the mind itself, including all its various states. Suppose here is a lake on a summer evening, smooth and calm, without a ripple on its surface. Let us call it the *chitta*. And suppose somebody throws a stone into this lake. What happens? First, there is the action, the blow given to the water, next, the water ascends and sends a reaction towards the stone, and that reaction takes the form of a wave. First, the water vibrates a little, and immediately sends back a reaction in the form of a wave. Let us compare the *chitta* to this lake, and the external objects to those stones thrown into it. As soon as it comes in contact with any external object by means of these *indriyas*, the *indriyas* must carry the *impression* of these external objects inside. That vibrating state of the mind-stuff is, what is called the *manas*, or the indecisive state. Next there is a reaction, and that reacting state of the mind is what is called the *buddhi*, or the determinative faulty ; along with this *buddhi* comes in another state of the mind, when there flashes the idea of *aham*, or the ego-consciousness and the external object. Suppose there is a mosquito sitting upon my hand. This sensation is carried to my *chitta* and that vibrates a little—this is the psychological *manas*. Then there is a reaction, and immediately comes the idea that I have a mosquito on my hand, and that I shall have to drive it off. Thus these stones are thrown into the lake, but in the case of the lake, every blow that comes to it, is from the external world, while in the case of



the lake of the mind, the blows may either come from the external world, or the internal world. This whole series is what is called the *antahkaraṇa*. Along with it, you ought to understand one thing more that will help you in understanding the Advaita system later on. It is this. All of you must have seen pearls and most of you know how pearls are made. Some grains of dust and sand enter into the body of the pearl oyster, and set up an irritation there, and the oyster's body reacts towards the irritation and covers the little particle with its own juice. That crystallises and forms the pearl. So the whole universe is the pearl which is being formed by us. What we get from the external world is simply the blow. Even to know that blow, we have to react, and as soon as we react, we project really a portion of our own mind towards the blow, and when we come to know of it, it is really our own mind as it has been shaped by the blow. Therefore it is clear even to those who want to believe in a hard and fast realism of the external world, and they cannot but admit it in these days of analytic psychology, that, supposing that we represent the external world by "X" what we know really is "X" plus mind, and this mind element is so great that it has covered the whole of that "X" which has remained unknown and unknowable throughout, and therefore, if there is an external world it is always unknown and unknowable. What we know of it, is as it has been moulded, formed, and fashioned by our own mind. So with the internal world also. The

same applies about our own soul, the *atman*. In order to know the *atman* we have to know it through the mind, and therefore, what little we know of this *atman* is simply the *atman* plus the mind. That is to say, the *atman* covered over, fashioned, and moulded by the mind, and nothing more. We shall come to this a little later again, so you will remember it.

The next thing to understand is this, that this body is the name of one continuous stream of matter. Every moment we are adding material particles to it, and every moment such material is getting out of it. It is like unto a river continually flowing, in which vast masses of water are always changing places ; though at the same time, we take up the whole thing in imagination, and call it always the same river. But what properly speaking is the river? The water in the river is changing, every moment the shores are changing, then what is the river? It is the name of this series of changes. So is the body, a series of changes, and so is the mind also. Such again is the Buddhistic theory, the great *Kṣhānika Vijñāna Vāda* doctrine, most difficult to understand, but most rigorously and logically worked out, which arose in India in opposition to a certain part of the Vedānta. And that doctrine there, had to be refuted and we shall see how, later on, it could only be answered by Advaitism and by nothing else. We shall see also how, in spite of people's curious notions about Advaitism, people's fright in Advaitism, in

The philosophical basis of the doctrine of Atman.

it alone lies the salvation of the world, because in it alone is the rationale of things to be found. Dualism with its various qualifications and other doctrines to suit are very good as means of worship, very satisfying to the mind, to be sure, for they help the mind onward ; but if man wants to be rational and religious at the same time, Advaita is the only system in the world for him. Well now, the mind is like unto the river, continually emptying itself at one end, and filling itself at the other end. Then where is that unity which we call the *âtman*? The idea is this that, inspite of this continuous change in the body, and inspite of this continuous change in the mind, there is in us something that is unchangeable. Rays of light coming from different quarters, fall upon a screen, or a wall, or upon something that is not changeable, and so only can they form a unity, a complete whole. Now where is this unchangeable thing in us falling upon which, as it were, the various ideas come to a unity and become one complete whole? This certainly cannot be the mind, seeing that, it always changes. Therefore there must be something which is neither the body nor the mind, something that changes not, something which is unchangeable, upon which all our ideas, our sensations fall, to form a unity and a complete whole, and that is the real soul, the *âtman* of man. And seeing that everything, whether composed of gross or fine matter, is changeful, that unchangeable something in us can no more be of material substance. Therefore it must be spiritual ;

that is to say, it is not matter. It is indestructible, unchangeable.

Next thing to understand is the doctrine of the *Paramatman* or, the universal soul. It is very far apart from those old arguments from Design which rise from the external world only. Our philosophers have attempted to know truth from the inner nature of man, and the question of the *Paramatman* rose just in the same way as the question of the soul, with them. Taking for granted that there is a soul, unchangeable in each man, which is neither the mind, nor the body, there is still to be found a unity of idea among the souls, a unity of feeling, of sympathy. How is it possible that my soul can act upon your soul, where is the medium through which it can work, where is the medium through which it can act? How is it I can feel anything about your soul? What is it that is in touch with your souls and my soul? Therefore there is a metaphysical necessity of admitting another soul, and it must be a soul which acts in contact with all the different souls; a soul, which covers and inter-penetrates all the infinite number of souls in the world, in and through which they all live, in and through which they all sympathise, and live, and work, for one another. And this universal Soul is *Paramâtman*, the Lord God of the universe. Again, it follows, that because this soul cannot be made up of matter, it is spiritual; it cannot obey the laws of matter, it cannot be judged by the laws of matter. It is there-

The doctrine of the *Paramatman*.

fore deathless and changeless—"This Self the fire cannot burn, nor instruments pierce, the sword cannot cut asunder, the air cannot dry up, nor the water melt,—unconquerable, deathless, and birthless is this Self of man."\* We know from the Gîtâ and the Vedânta, that this individual Self is also *vibhu* or omnipresent. Of course there are sects in India according to which this Self is *anu* ; but what they mean by it is that it is *anu* in manifestation but its real nature is *vibhu*.

The principle of evolution in the East and West.

There comes another idea, startling perhaps, yet a characteristically Indian idea, and if there is any idea that is common to all our sects it is this. Therefore I beg you to pay attention to this one idea and to remember it, for this is the very foundation of all philosophic thought that we have in India. The idea is this. You have heard of the doctrine of physical evolution preached in the Western world, by the German and the English savants. It tells us that the bodies of different animals are essentially one in nature ; the differences that we see in them are but different expressions of the same protoplasmic body under varied circumstances and embodiment. That from the lowest worm to the highest and the most saintly man, it is but one continuous line of growth where the lower form changes into the next higher

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\* मेमं हिन्दुमि अस्मादि मेमं इति पाचनः

न मेमं नो इत्यस्यापी न जीवसि वास्तः ।

अच्छेद्योऽयमस्मादिदमस्मादिदमोऽयम् च ।

मित्रः सर्वजनः स्नातुरस्मादिदं सनातनः ।

and so on, going up and up, higher and higher, and becoming more and more perfect. We also had that theory of evolution in our philosophy. Declares our Yogi Patanjali—"Jātyāntara parināmah prakṛityāpūrat"—the *jāti* or species—*Antara*,—another species, and *parināmah* is change, so, the whole thing means, one species changes into another. But then how does it change?—here is where we differ from the Europeans. We say it changes by *Prakṛityāpūrat*, "By the infilling of nature." The scholars in the west say that it is competition, natural and sexual selection, and so forth, that force one body to change into another. But here is our idea, which is a still better analysis of the process, going deeper into the nature of things—"one form changes into another form by the infilling of nature." Now what is meant by this 'infilling of nature'? We admit that the amoeba goes on evolving higher and higher until it becomes a Buddha, we admit that. But we admit, at the same time, that you cannot get a certain amount of work out of a machine until you put that amount in it in another form of energy. The sum total of the energy remains the same, whatever the form it may take. If you want a mass of energy at one end you have got to put it in at the other end, it may be in another form, but the amount must be the same. Therefore, if a Buddha is the one end of the change, the very amoeba must have been the Buddha also. If the Buddha is the evolved amoeba, the amoeba, must have been the involved Buddha also.

To the Hindu, evolution implies involution.

If this universe is the manifestation of an almost infinite amount of energy, that energy must have been in it in a latent form when it was in a state of *pralaya*, it cannot have been otherwise. As such it follows that every soul is infinite. From the lowest worm that crawls under our feet to the noblest and greatest saints, all have infinite power and infinite purity behind. The difference in them lies only in the degree of manifestation of the same. The worm is manifesting only a little bit of that energy ; you manifest more, and a god-man still more ; that is all the difference. But it is there all the same. Says Patanjali :— “Tattah Kshetrikavat,” that is, “like the peasant irrigating his field.” The peasant who has recourse to a reservoir of water has simply to unlock the gate to bring water into his field. When he wants water he has simply to open the lock and in rushes the water out of its own power. The power has not to be added, it is already there in the reservoir. So every one of us, every being has at his own background such a reservoir of infinite power, infinite purity, infinite bliss ; only these locks, these bodies, are hindering the flow of the same to the fullest. It is these bodies that hinder us from expressing that which we really are. And as these bodies become more and more finely organised, as the *tama guna* in them becomes converted into the *raja guna*, and the *raja guna* into the *sattva guna*, more and more of that power and purity behind, become manifest.

It is on account of that principle, namely, to express oneself by converting the lower faculties into the higher and highest that our people have been so careful about the food question. It may be that the original ideas have been lost now, just as it has happened with our marriage-system as it obtains now-a-days, and of which, I shall just speak a word or two. The ideas behind the early-marriage system of the Hindus are the only ideas through which there can be a real civilization. There cannot be anything else. For if a man or woman were allowed the freedom to take up any woman or man as his wife or her husband, if individual pleasure, if satisfaction of animal instincts, were to be allowed to run loose in society, the result must be evil ; evil, wicked and demonical children will be born thereof. Aye, man in every country is on the one hand, producing such brutal children, and on the other hand, multiplying the police force to keep those brutes down. The question is not to mitigate the evil after causing things to happen in that way, but to prevent the very birth of that evil. So long as you live in society, your marriage certainly affects me and everyone else, and therefore, society has the right to dictate whom you shall marry, and whom you shall not. Such great ideas are behind the system of child marriage here. And it is for this that they consult what they call the astrological *jati* of the bride and the bridegroom. And I may remark in passing, that according to Manu, a child who is born of lust is not an Aryan. But

Hindu marriage : its meaning and purpose.



it is the child whose whole life from birth to death is regulated according to the rules of the Vedas, that is and can be Aryan. Yes, and less of such Aryan children are being produced now everywhere and the result is the mass of evil in the present day, which we call *Kali Yuga*. But we have lost all those noble ideas standing behind our social institutions. It is true we cannot carry all those noble ideas to the fullest length now ; it is perfectly true that we have made almost a caricature of some of those great ideas. It is perfectly true that the fathers and mothers are not what they were in old times, neither is society so educated as it used to be, neither has society that careful watch over and love for all comprising it as it used to have once. But, however defective our working out of them may be, the principles are sound and if our working of them has been defective or has failed in any department, take them up and work them out better, but do not kill the principle. The same applies to the food question ; the working out of details in it have been bad, very bad indeed, but that does not hurt the principle. The principle is eternal and must be there always. Work it out afresh and make a reformed application of the same.

This one great idea of the *atman*, every one of our sects in India, has got to believe in. Only the Dualists preach that this *atman* through evil works becomes *sankuchita*, that is, all its powers and its nature become contracted, and that by good works again, that nature expands ; while the Advaitist says, that

The doctrine of Atman common to all sects in India.

the *atman* never expands or contracts, but merely seems to do so, it just appears to have become contracted. That is all the difference, but all have the one idea that the *atman* has all the powers in it already, not that anything will come to it from the skies. And for the matter of that, your Vedas even are not inspired, but "expired" so to speak ; not that they came from anywhere outside, but that they are eternal laws living in every soul. And the principles of the Vedas are seen working in the soul of the ant as well as in the soul of the god. The ant has only to evolve and get the body of a sage or a Rishi, for expressing that infinite power and purity according to those, the eternal laws. This therefore is a great thing to understand, that infinite power is already in us, that salvation is already inside us. Whether you say that the *atman* has become contracted, or say that it appears to be so by its being covered with the evil of *māyā*—it matters little. The idea is there already that it is perfect, you must have to believe in its perfection, believe in the possibility of everybody becoming perfect, and that, even in the lowest man there is the same possibility of becoming as perfect as Buddha. This is the doctrine of the *atman*.

We come now to deal with a tremendous argument against this doctrine. Here are the Buddhists, who analyse the body into a material stream and equally analyse the mind into another. And about this *atman* they state, that belief in it is unnecessary ; we need not assume the *atman* at all.

The Kshā-  
nikavad.

Statement  
of criticisms  
from the  
Buddhists  
on the  
doctrine  
of Atman.

What use, asks he, believing in an eternal substance in which qualities adhere, when to admit the existence of *gunas* or qualities, is sufficient for our purpose. It is illogical to assume two causes where only one will explain the whole thing. And so the fight went on, and all the theories which supported the doctrine of soul-substance were thrown to the ground by the Buddhists. There was a break up all along the line of all those who held on to the doctrine of substance and qualities, who believed that you have a soul, and I have a soul, and every one has a soul, separate from the mind and body—and each one of those souls are individual entities. The idea of qualified Dualism, that there is the body, then behind that, the fine body or mind, behind that again, the *âtman*, and in and through all the *âtmans*, the *Paramâtman*, God, was held to be right up to this time. The *âtman* and *Paramâtman* are the substance, to which the mind and body adhere like so many qualities. Now the Buddhists raise the difficulty that nobody has seen those substances, and none can ever conceive of those even, so what is the use of thinking that there exists such a thing as the soul-substance? Why not become a *Kshanika-Vignanavadin* and say that whatever exists is but a succession of mental currents and nothing more. They do not adhere to each other, they do not form a unit, only in them the one is chasing the other, like the waves in the ocean that are never complete, never forming one unit whole. The ego-consciousness is nothing but a succession of mental waves, and when

one such wave goes away it generates another, and so on, and the cessation of these wave-forms is what is called *Nirvāna*. You see that Dualism is mute before this, it is impossible that it can bring up any argument, and the Dualistic God also cannot be retained here. The idea of a God that is omnipresent, and yet is a person who creates without hands, and moves without feet, and so on, and who has created the universe as a *kumbhakāra* (potter) creates a *ghata* (pot),—the Buddhist declares, he is going to fight against and not worship. This universe is full of misery and if that be the work of a God, the Buddhist is going to fight against him. And secondly, he declares that such a God is illogical and impossible. We need not go into the details of the arguments against the Design theory which the *Kshanikas* advanced. Sufficient to say that the idea of the Personal God fell to pieces before them.

But that is nothing disastrous however, for truth and nothing but truth, should be your watchword, says the Veda, "Truth alone triumphs, and not untruth. Through truth alone the way to *Devayāna* lies."\* But everybody marches forward under that banner only to smash another man's position. You come with your idea of God to pick up a quarrel with another man who is worshipping an image, thinking that you are wonderfully rational and can break him up, but if he turns round and smashes up your idea of

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\* "सत्यमेव जयते नादृतं सत्यमेव यत्ना विजयी विजयानः ।"

God and calls that an imaginary idea, what do you do? You fall back on faith and raise the cry of atheism, the old cry of a weak man—that whosoever defeats him in argument in this matter, is an atheist. But that ought not to be so ; if you want to be rational, be rational all along the line, and if not, allow others the same privilege which you ask for yourselves. Now, how can you positively prove the existence of God? There are arguments on the other hand to disprove it almost. How will you prove the existence of God, and his attributes, how will you prove the existence of an infinite number of souls and each soul an individual entity at that? In what are you an individual? You are not an individual as a body, for you know to-day better than even the Buddhists of old knew, that what may have been matter in the sun has just now become matter in you, and will go out a little later and become matter in the plants perhaps,—then where is your individuality in the body? The same applies to the mind. Where is your individuality in the mind? You have one thought to-night and another to-morrow. You do not think the same way as you thought when you were a child. Old men do not think the same way as they did when they were young. Where is your individuality in the mind, then? Do not say that it is in your consciousness, or *ahankāra*, because that covers only a small part of your existence. While I am talking to you all my organs are working and I am not conscious of it. If consciousness is the proof of exist-

ence, they do exist then, because, I am not conscious of them. Where are you then with your pet theories and how can you prove them?

The Buddhists declare the idea of Personal God to be not only illogical, but immoral, for it teaches man to be a coward and to seek for assistance from outside, which nobody can so give him. Here is the universe, man made it, why then depend on an imaginary being outside, whom nobody ever saw or felt or got help from? Why then do you make cowards of yourselves and teach your children that the highest state of man is to go crawling before this imaginary being, saying that you are weak, impure, and everything vile in this universe? The Buddhists urge, that not only do you tell a lie in that, but you bring a tremendous amount of evil upon your children. For, mark you, this world is one of hypnotisation. Whatever you think yourself to be that you truly become. Almost the very first words the great Buddha uttered were—"What you think, that you are, what you shall think, that you shall be." If that is true, do not teach yourself that you are nothing, aye, that you cannot do anything unless you are helped by somebody who does not live here, but sits above the damp clouds. The result will be that you will be more and more weak everyday; the result will be that prayers like this: "we are very impure, Lord, make us pure," will hypnotise and put you into the track of all sorts of vices. Aye, the Buddhists say that ninety per cent of vices that you see in every society are on account of this

idea of a Personal God, and the weakening effects of such worship on mankind. Says the Buddhist to the Vaishnavist, if your ideal, your aim and goal is to go to the place called *Vaikuntha* where God lives, and there stand before him with folded hands all through eternity, it is better that you should commit suicide. The Buddhist urges that to escape such a state as that, he is going after annihilation, or *Nirvāna*. I am putting these ideas before you as a Buddhist, just for the time being, because now-a-days all these impersonal ideals, are said to make you immoral, and I am trying to tell you how that other side looks. Let us see both sides boldly and bravely. We have seen first of all, that this cannot be proved, the idea of a Personal God creating the world. Because a potter creates a pot, therefore a God creates the world. Then your potter is a God in a small scale ; but if any one tells you that he can make his pots without head and hands you think of taking him into a lunatic asylum. Why do you not do so when people say that God creates without head or hands? Has ever your Personal God, the creator of the world and all that, to whom you cry all your life, has he ever helped you, is the next challenge from modern science. It will prove that all the help that you have got, have come from your own exertions and you needed not to have spent your energy in that way ; you could indeed have done things better without that weeping and crying at all. And along with this idea of a Personal God comes tyranny and priestcraft.

Tyranny and priestcraft have been everywhere where this idea existed, and until the lie is knocked on the head, say the Buddhists, tyranny will not cease. So long as man thinks he has to cower before another strong being, there will be priests with exclusive rights and privileges to make men cower before them ; for these poor men will continue to ask a priest to stand as interceders for them. The defect will not be remedied by discarding the Brahmins of the present day, for, others will take their place, and these new upstarts will be the worst of tyrannisers always. So these priests will be there, so long as this Personal God idea will be there, and society will not rise to a greater status of morality so long as priestcraft and tyranny go hand in hand. But how did it come about? Some strong men in olden times got people in their hands and said you must obey us or we will destroy you. That was the long and short of it. Next, the Buddhist says, you are rational up to the point that everything is the result of the law of *karma*. You all believe, in the infinity of souls, and that, souls are without birth or death, and the law of *karma*, which is perfect logic no doubt, for there cannot be a cause without an effect, the present must have had its cause in the past and will have its effect in the future. You Hindus say that *karma* is *jada* and not *chaitanya*,\* therefore, some *chaitanya* is necessary to bring this cause to fruition.

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\* *Jada*—gross matter.

*Chaitanya*—conscious force.



Is it that *chaitanya* is necessary to bring a plant to fruition? If I plant the seed, and add water, no *chaitanya* is necessary to cause the growth of the plant. You may say there was some original *chaitanya* there, but the souls themselves are the *chaitanya*, so no other *chaitanya* will be necessary. If human souls have *chaitanya*, what necessity is there for a God, as the Jains say, who believe in souls, unlike the Buddhists, but do not believe in God. So your belief in the existence of souls as well as of God is not original. And when you try to criticise saying that all impersonal ideals such as those of Buddhism and Advaitism will make for immorality, just read a little of what has been done in India by sects that believe in the Personal God idea. Generally speaking, you will find less of immorality in the camp of those who believe in impersonal ideals because it takes a better type of mind to understand these. So where stand you then? There is no help out of the clutches of the Buddhist. You may quote the Vedas, to support the Personal God ideals but he does not believe in them. He will say, "my *Tripitakas* say no to it, and they are without beginning or end, not even written by Buddha, for Buddha says he is only reciting them; they are eternal." And if he adds, "yours are wrong, while ours are the true Vedas, yours being manufactured by the Brahmin priests, are false," how do you escape?

The Bud-  
dhist views  
criticised.

Now, here is the way to get out. Take up the first objection, the metaphysical one, that substance and

qualities are different. Says the Advaitist, they are not. There is no difference between substance and qualities. You know the old illustration, how the rope is taken for the snake, and when you see the snake you do not see the rope at all, the rope has vanished. Dividing a thing into substance and quality is a metaphysical something in the brains of philosophers, for there never can be such a division in actual experience outside. You see a concrete substance, if you are an ordinary man, and abstract qualities only, if you are a great *yogi*, but you never see both at the same time. So Buddhists, your quarrel about substance and qualities has been but a miscalculation which does not stand in fact. But, if the substance is unqualified, there can only be one. If you take qualities off from the soul, and show that these qualities are in the mind, only superimposed on the soul, there can never be more than one soul, for it is qualification that makes the difference between one soul and another. For how do you know that one soul is different from another? It is owing to certain differentiating marks, certain qualities. And where qualities do not exist how can there be differentiation? Therefore there cannot be even two souls, but one only, and your belief in a *Paramâtman* is unnecessary, for this very soul is that. The one who is called the *Paramâtman*, that very one is called *Jivâtman*, also. And Dualists, such as Sāṅkhyans and others, who say that the soul is omnipresent, *vibhu*, contradict themselves when they say that there are

two or more than two infinities. For there can be but only one infinite. What else? This one infinite is the *Atman*, everything else is its manifestation. There is the argument against the Buddhist but the matter does not end there. The Advaitist position is not merely a weak one of criticism. The advaitist criticises others when they come too near him, and just throws them away, that is all, but he propounds his own position. He is the only one that does not stop with criticism and showing books in his favour only. You say the universe is a thing of continuous motion. In *vyashti* everything is moving, you are moving, the table is moving, motion everywhere, it is the nature of *samsāra* or *Jagat*; continuous motion is *jagat*. Therefore there cannot be an individuality in this *jagat*, because individuality means that which does not change, and there cannot be any changeable individuality, for that would be a contradiction in terms. There is no such a thing as individuality in this little world of ours, the *jagat*. Thought and feeling, mind and body, beasts and animals, and everything else, are in a continuous state of flux. But suppose you take the universe as a unit whole; can it change or move? Certainly not. The motion of a body is possible of comprehension in comparison with something which has a little less of motion in it or is entirely motionless. The universe as a whole, therefore, is motionless, unchangeable. You will, therefore, be an individual then and then alone, when you will feel yourself to be one with the whole

universe. That is why the Vedántist says that so long as there are two, fear does not cease. It is only when one does not see another, does not feel another, when it is all one, then alone death ceases, then alone *samsára* vanishes. Advaita teaches us therefore, that man is individual in being universal, and in not being particular. You are immortal only when you are the whole. You are fearless and deathless only when you are one with the universe, and then alone you will find that what you call the universe, the God, and your own existence, form one Unit whole and are one and the same. It is the one undivided existence which we, and others having the same state of mind as we have, look upon as manifold universe, with its suns, and moons, and stars and so forth. People who have done a little better *karma*, get another state of mind and when they die look upon it as *svarga*, peopled with celestial beings. People who are still higher see this very same thing as *Brahma loka*, and the perfect ones neither see the earth nor the heavens, nor any *loka* at all in it. To their vision, this universe has vanished, and Brahman stands in its stead.

Can we know this Brahman? I have told you of the beautiful realistic delineation of the infinite in the Samhita. Here we shall find another presentation of the same but from the internal standpoint. The former was the infinite of the external but in this latter we have the infinite of thought. There the painting of the infinite was attempted in positive language which failed to express it, so here the

All  
knowledge  
is limitation

attempt was made to paint it in negative language as we shall see. Now, here is the universe, and even admitting that it is the Brahman, can we know the Brahman? We can never know it, and you must understand this clearly. Again and again this question will come to you, if this is Brahman, how can we know it? "By what, O Maitreyi, the knower can be known; how can the knower be known?"\* The eyes see everything; can they see themselves? They cannot. Knowledge itself is a limitation, to know a thing is to limit it. Children of Aryas, you must remember this, for herein lies a big truth. All the Western temptations that come to you have for their metaphysical basis the principle that there is nothing higher than sense-knowledge. In the East, in accordance with our Vedas, we say, that knowledge always lowers the thing known because it is in its nature a limitation. When you want to know a thing, it immediately becomes limited by your mind. Refer back to that instance of the oyster making pearls, how it is but bringing into our understanding a thing in the terms of our consciousness and not knowing the thing as it is in itself. This is true with regard to our knowledge of every thing, but can you thus limit the infinite? Can you limit Him who forms the substance of all knowledge, Him who is the *Sakshi*, the witness, and without whom you cannot have any knowledge, Him who has no qualities; who is the witness of the whole universe, the witness in our own souls? How can

you know Him? By what means can you limit Him? The whole universe is a false attempt of the Atman to express Himself. It is, as it were, the infinite *Atman* trying to see the reflection of His own face, mirrored in the bodies and minds of all beings from the lowest to the highest. It is, as it were, he is taking up one such mirror after another and is rejecting it again as insufficient until at last in the human body he comes to the conclusion that there cannot be any expression of the infinite in the finite. Then comes the retrograde march, and this is what is called renunciation, *vairāgya*. Back from the senses, do not go to the senses, is the watchword of *vairāgya*. And from that, springs that self-control, which is the basis of all morality, of all spiritual life; and you must remember that the universe begins to show its real nature from the time when you have this *tapasya*, or real renunciation. And as you go back and back, all that the universe of matter and mind can give are manifested before you and they are all left aside one after the other until you remain what you really are. This is *moksha*, or liberation.

So this idea we have to understand.—*Vijnātāram* are *kena vijnāniyāt*.—"How to know the knower?" the knower cannot be known, because if it were known it will not be the knower. If you look at your eyes in a reflecting mirror the reflection is no more your eyes, but something else, only a reflection. But if this Soul, this universal, infinite being which you are, is only a witness, what good is it to know it as such?

How to  
know the  
Atman, the  
knower?

It cannot live, and move about, and enjoy the world, as we do. People cannot understand how the witness can enjoy, and there are many who say, "Oh, you Hindus have become quiescent and good for nothing, through such a doctrine as says you are mere witnesses." In reply we can say, that, first of all, it is the witness only that can enjoy. If there is a *kusti*, or a wrestling match, who enjoys it more—those who are playing, or those who are looking on from outside? The more you are the witness of anything in life, the more you enjoy it. Such enjoyment is *ánandam*, therefore, infinite bliss can only come to you when you have become the witness of this universe, and then alone you become *mukta* or Free. It is the witness alone that can work without any desire, without any idea of going to heaven, without any idea of praise or blame from others. The witness alone enjoys, and none else.

Before coming to the ethics of Advaita, we must understand one thing which is the metaphysical basis of Advaitism, the theory of *máyá*. Everyone of these points in the Advaita system requires years to understand and months to tell. Therefore you will excuse me if I only just touch them *en passant*. This theory of *máyá* has been the most difficult thing to understand in all ages. Let me tell you in a few words, that it is no theory, but a combination of the three ideas *Desa-kála-nimitta*—time, space, and causation—which again, have been further reduced into two, *náma rúpa* or names and

forms. Suppose there is a wave in the ocean. The wave is distinct from the ocean only in its form and name, and this form and name cannot have any separate existence from the wave ; they exist only with the wave. The wave may subside, but the same amount of water which forms the wave remains, even when the name and form of the wave has vanished for ever. So this *máyá* is what makes the difference between you and me, between all animals and man, between gods and men, between all things, in short. In fact, it is this *máyá* that causes the *Atman* to be caught, as it were, in so many millions of beings who are all different in name and form. If you leave it alone, let name and form go, it vanishes for ever, and you become what you really are. This is *máyá*. Again I say, it is no theory, but a statement of facts. When the realist states that this world exists, what he means, is, that this table has an independent existence of its own, that it does not depend on the existence of anything else in the universe, and if this whole universe be destroyed and annihilated this table will remain as it is just now. A little knowledge shows you that that cannot be. Everything here in the sense-world is dependent and inter-dependent, relative and co-relative, and the existence of one depends on the existence of other. There are three steps, therefore, in our knowledge of things ; the first is when we take each thing as individual and separate from every other ; the next step is to find that there is a relation and co-relation

Three ideas  
of God



## 1. Extra-Cosmic God.

between all things ; and the last is that, there is only one thing which we see as so many. The idea of God with the ignorant is that this God is somewhere outside the universe, that is to say, the conception of God with them is extremely human ; He does what a man does, only on a bigger scale. And we have seen how that God is proved in just a few words to be unreasonable and insufficient.

## 2. God as Cosmic Force.

The next idea is the idea of Him as power which we see manifested everywhere. This is the real idea of the Personal God, the same that we get in the *Chandi*,\* but, mark me, it is not a God that you make the reservoir of all good qualities only. You cannot have two Gods, God and Satan ; you must have only one, and dare to call Him the producer of what we call good and bad, both. You must have only one, and take the logical consequences of it.† He is like the light before me which will illumine equally when you do a work of charity or forge

## 3. God as Absolute.

another's name with its help. This is the second stage of the idea of God, and the third is that, God is neither outside nor inside nature, but that God and nature and soul and universe are all convertible

\* A portion of the Markandeya Purana, which deals with the real nature of the Power that creates, preserves and destroys the Universe.

† “ वा देवी सर्वभूतेषु शान्तिरूपेण स्थिता ।

नमस्तस्मै नमस्तस्मै नमस्तस्मै नमो नमः ॥

वा देवी सर्वभूतेषु शान्तिरूपेण स्थिता ।

नमस्तस्मै नमस्तस्मै नमस्तस्मै नमो नमः ॥ ” संखी ।

terms. You can never have any two of those aforesaid ideas together just as you can never see yourself to be the body and the soul at once. The terms in metaphysics alone have deluded you to the belief that you can do so. With that you come to assume that you are a body and have a soul, and that you are both together. How can that be? Try it in your own mind and find that you cannot think so. If you are a *yogi* you will think yourself as *chaitanya* and the body idea will vanish from you. If you are an ordinary man, you will think of yourself as a body and the idea of spirit will be nonexistent for you. But because the metaphysical ideas exist that man has a body and a soul, you think that man is both of these simultaneously. So one thing at a time. You do not see God when you see matter; you see the effect and the effect alone, and the cause you cannot see, and the moment you see the cause, the effect will have vanished, and you will exclaim, "where is this world, and who has taken it off?"

"One that is formless and limitless, beyond all compare, beyond all qualities, such a Brahman, Oh sage, O learned man, will shine in your heart in *samādhi*." "With whom all the changes of nature cease for ever, that which is Thought beyond all thoughts, that which the Vedas declare to be the essence of what we call our existence, is Brahman and so will He manifest Himself in you in *samādhi*." "Beyond all birth and death, the Infinite, the incomparable, like the deluge of water during the *mahā-*

*pralaya* of the universe—water above, water beneath, water on all sides, and on the face of that water not a wave, not a ripple,—silent and calm, in which all visions, all fights and quarrels have ceased for ever, the Brahman, for such is He, will shine in your hearts in *samādhi*.”\* Such a realisation may come to man and when that has come the world as we see it will vanish.

We have seen that this Brahman, this Reality, is unknown and unknowable, not in the sense of the agnostic, but because, to say that we know It would be a blasphemy, for we are It already. We have also seen that this Brahman is not this table and yet It is this table. For if you take off the name and form of the table, whatever reality will be left of it will be He, the Brahman, for He is It. It is He who is the reality in everything.

The one  
appears  
many  
through  
Maya.

“Thou art the woman, thou the man, thou the young man walking in the pride of youth, thou the old man tottering on his stick, thou art all in all, in every thing, and I am thee, I am thee.”† That is the theme of Advaitism. A few words more. Herein lies, we find, the explanation of the essence of things. We have seen how here alone we can

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\* Vide विवेकचूडामणि ।

† “तं ज्ञो तं पुनानसि

तं कुमार एत वा कुमारो !

तं जीवीं दृष्ट्वेव वयसि ।

तं ज्ञातो भवसि विवक्षीमुखः ॥” वेदान्तसंग्रह उपनिषद्

take a firm stand against all the onrush of logic and scientific knowledge and so forth. Here at last reason has a firm foundation, but the Indian Vedāntist does not curse the preceding steps which lead him to it ; he looks back and he blesses them, for he knows that though they gave a partial statement of the absolute truth yet they were true under certain circumstances. They gave the vision of the real thing, but through the glass of *māyā*, and though distorted it might have looked, yet it was a vision of truth and nothing but truth, was all that they gave. The same God whom the ignorant man saw outside nature, the same whom the little-knowing man saw as inter-penetrating the universe, and the same whom the sage realises as his own self and the whole universe itself, all are but visions of one and the same being, of the same entity seen from different standpoints of view, seen through different glasses of *māyā*, perceived by minds under different circumstances, and all the differences in visions were caused by that. Not only is it that those steps are true but one leads to the other. What is the difference between science and common knowledge? If you ask one of the ignorant villagers the cause of something unusual which is happening, he will tell you that it is a ghost that causes the phenomenon, because, it is the nature of ignorance to seek for causes outside of effects. If a stone falls, it is thrown by a devil or a ghost, says the ignorant man, but the scientific man says it is the law of

Advaitism  
is the  
scientific  
religion.

nature, the law of gravitation that causes it. So that is what generates a fight between science and religion, everywhere. Religions are encumbered with explanations of phenomena from supernatural causes or causes which are outside the nature of them. So they assign one angel to the charge of the sun, another to the moon, and so on, *ad infinitum*. It is almost the same as to assert that every change is caused by a ghost, or a spirit, the one common point of all such explanations being that they attempt to find an extraneous cause, outside the thing ; but the very word science means that the cause of a thing has to be sought out from the nature of the thing itself. As Science is progressing, step by step, it has taken on itself the task of explaining phenomena from natural causes and Advaitism alone as religion, countenancing that process, is the most scientific religion. It says this universe has neither been created by an extra-cosmic God, nor is it the work of any outside genius, but is self-creating, self-dissolving, self-manifesting, infinite existence, the Brahman and *Tat twam asi*—"Thou art That ; That is It." That is the Advaitist position and you see that this, and this alone, can be the only scientific religion. And with all the prattle about science that is going on daily at present in half-educated India, with all its talk about rationalism and reason that I hear every day, I expect that all of you will come over and dare to be Advaitists, and dare to preach the principles of the Advaita to the world, "for the good of many,

for the happiness of many." If you do not, I take you for cowards. If you cannot get over your cowardice, if your fear is your excuse, allow the same liberty unto others, do not try to break up the poor idol-worshipper, do not try to call him a devil, do not go about preaching unto every man who does not agree entirely with you ; know first that you who are educated are cowards yourselves, and if society frightens you, if your own superstitions of the past frighten you so much, how much more will these superstitions frighten and bind them down who are ignorant. So have mercy on others. Would to God that the whole world were Advaitists to-morrow, not in theory, but in realisation ; but since that cannot be, let us do the next best thing, take the ignorant by the hands, lead them always step by step in the measure of their strength, knowing that every step in religious growth is true and progressive. And the progress is not from bad to good, but from good to better.

Something more has to be told about the ethics of Advaitism. Boys lightly talk now-a-days,—a talk which they learn from somebody, Lord knows from whom—that Advaitism will make people all immoral, because if we are all one and all God, we need not be moral at all. But, that is the argument of the brute, who can only be kept down by the whip. If any one is such a brute as to want always a whip to keep him down he ought to commit suicide first. Let me tell you that Advaitism alone is the true explana-

Advaita  
alone gives  
the true  
sanction for  
morality.

tion of the principle of morality. All religions preach that the essence of morality is to do good unto others, and to be unselfish. But why? Because some god has said it? He is not for me. Is it because some scriptures have so enjoined it? Let them, that is nothing to me. Each one for himself and somebody take the hindermost, that is all the morality in the world, at least with many. What is the reason why I should be moral? You cannot explain it except when you come to know the principle laid down in the Gita, that: "He who sees everyone in himself, and himself in everyone, thus seeing the same God living equally in all, the sage, for such is he, no more kills the self by the self." Know through Advaita that if you hurt anyone you hurt yourself; they are all you. Whether you know it or not, through all hands you work, through all feet you move, you are the king enjoying in the palace, you are the beggar leading that miserable existence in the street, you are in the ignorant as well as in the learned, you are in the man who is weak, and in the man who is strong; know this and be sympathetic. And that is why we must not hurt others. That is why I do not even care if I have to starve, because there will be millions of mouths eating at the same time, and they are all mine. Therefore I should not care what becomes of me and mine, for the whole universe is mine, I am enjoying all the bliss in it at the same time; and who can kill me, who is one with the universe? Herein is the basis of all

morality. The others teach it, but cannot give you its reason.

This principle of Advaitism that one is one with the infinite, will have to be heard first, then thought upon, and then realised.\* And what will be the gain? Strength and illumination. It will take off that veil of hypnotism which you yourself have cast upon the world. Send not out thoughts and words of weakness unto yourself or to humanity. Know that all sins and all evils can be summed up into that one word—weakness. It is weakness that is the motive power in all evil doing ; it is weakness that is the motive power in all wrong acts ; it is weakness that makes men do what they ought not to do ; it is weakness that makes them manifest as different from what they really are. Let them all know what they are , let them repeat to themselves day and night what they are in their real nature. Let them suck it with their mother's milk, the idea of strength—I am He, I am He. And then let them think of it, and out of that thought will proceed works such as the world has never seen. So that is what is to be done. This Advaitism is said by some to be impracticable ; that is to say, it is not yet manifesting itself on the material plane. To a certain extent it is true, but herein is the remedy for it, remember the saying of the Vedas—"Om, this is the great secret ; Om, this is the greatest possession ; he who knows the secret

Advaita alone is strength-giving

Is Advaitism impracticable?



of this Om, whatever he desires that he gets."\* You shall have to know first the secret of this Om, that you are That ; you shall have to know first the secret of this *Tattwam asi*, and then and then alone, whatever you want shall come to you. You shall have to believe that you are That, if you want to be great in the material plane also. I may be a little bubble, and you a mountain-high wave, but we must know that for both of us the infinite ocean is the background, the infinite God our magazine of power and strength, and we can draw as much as we like, both of us, from that reservoir behind. Believe, therefore, in yourselves. The secret of Advaita is—Believe in yourselves first, and then believe in anything else. In the history of the world, you will find that only those nations that have believed in themselves have become great and strong. In the history of each nation, you will always find that individuals that have believed in themselves have become great and strong. Here, in this India, came an Englishman, who was only a clerk, and for want of funds and other reasons he tried to blow his brains out twice, and when he failed, he believed in himself, believed that he was born to do great things, and that man became Lord Clive, the founder of an empire. If he had believed the *padres* and gone crawling all his life, saying, "Oh Lord I am weak, and I am low"—where would he have been ?

It asks you  
to believe  
in your-  
selves.

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\* श्रीमन्निरुक्तं तत्र श्रीमन्निरुक्तं परं :

श्रीमन्निरुक्तं तत्र श्रीमन्निरुक्तं तत्र श्रीमन्निरुक्तं । " कठोपनिषद् ।

In a lunatic asylum. They have made lunatics of you with these evil teachings. I have seen all the world over the bad effects of these teachings of weakness and false humility, and these are destroying the human race. Our children are brought up in this way, and is it a wonder that they become semi-lunatics as they are?

This is the practical side of the Advaita Vedanta. Believe, therefore, in yourselves, and if you want material wealth, work it out ; it will come to you. If you want to be intellectual, work it out on the intellectual plane, and intellectual giants you shall be. And if you want to attain to freedom, take and work it out on the spiritual plane, and Gods you shall be, and finally enter into the blissful state of *Nirvāṇa*. The defect here is that up to this time the Advaita has been worked out on the spiritual plane only, now the time has come when you have to make it practical in the material plane also. It shall no more be a *Rahasya*, a secret, it shall no more live with monks in caves and forests, in the Himalayas ; but it must come down to the daily, everyday life of the people ; it shall be worked out in the palace of the king, in the cave of the recluse, it shall be worked out in the cottage of the poor, in the street of the beggar, everywhere and by everybody. And as the *Gītā* says,—*Svalpamāpyasya dharmasya trāyate mahato bhayāt ?*, the realisation of a little even of this religion will save us from great fear. Therefore, do not be discouraged even if you cannot apply it to every detail

**This is the  
new Dispensation—  
bring  
Advaita  
down to  
the masses.**

of your life in practice, for this religion is so great, says Lord Krishna, that even the least done of it brings a great amount of good. Therefore, children of the Aryans, do not sit idle, awake and arise, and stop not till the goal is reached. The time has come when this Advaita is to be worked out practically in every plane of life by everyone, without any distinction of caste, colour or sex. Let us bring it down from heaven unto the earth ; this is the present dispensation. Aye, the voices of our forefathers of old are telling us to stop not until we have done that. Let the teachings of the Advaita come down to all, high and low, until they permeate the world, until they enter into every pore of society, and become the common property of everybody, until they become part and parcel of our lives, enter into our veins and tingle with every drop of blood there. Aye, you may be astonished to hear it, but the Europeans are better practical Vedantists than we are. I used to stand on the sea-side of New York and look at the emigrants coming from different countries, crushed, down-trodden, hopeless, with small bundles of clothes as all their possession, their dress all in rags, unable to look a man in the face ; if they saw a policeman they were afraid and tried to get to the other side of the footpath ; and then, mark you, in six months those very men were walking erect, well clothed, looking everybody in the face ! And what makes this wonderful difference ? One of them has come from Armenia, or perhaps from somewhere else, where

he was crushed down beyond all recognition, where everybody told him he was a born slave, and born to remain in his low state all his life, the least move from which would have made the strong crush his very life out of him. There even the very air murmured round him, "Slave ; you are a slave, so remain there. Hopeless you were born, hopeless remain " But when he landed in the streets of New York, he found a well-dressed gentleman shaking him by the hand ; it made no difference that the one was in rags and the other well-clad. He went a step further and saw a restaurant where gentlemen were dining at a table ; he was asked to take a seat at a corner of the same table ; and thus he went about, and found a new life, found that there was a place where at least he was recognised as a man among men. Perhaps he went to Washington, and there saw men coming from distant villages, ill-clad peasants, all shaking hands with the President ; he took courage and shook hands with the President himself. Then the veil of *māyā* slipped away from him. He, the free man, who has been hypnotised into slavery and weakness, awake once more, rises up and finds himself to be a man in the world of men ! Aye, in this country of ours, the very birthplace of the Vedānta, our masses have been hypnotised for ages into that very state. To touch them is pollution ; to sit with them is pollution ! "Hopeless they were born ; so hopeless they must remain" ; and the result is that they have been sinking, sinking, sink-

ing and have come to the last stage to which human beings can come. For what country is there in the world where man has to sleep with the cattle? And for this, blame no body else, do not commit the mistake of the ignorant. The effect is here and the cause is here too. We are to blame. Stand up, be bold, and take the blame on your own shoulders. Do not go about throwing mud at others ; for all the evils you suffer from, you are the sole, the only cause.

Build the nation on the solid foundation of renunciation and love.

Young men of Lahore, understand this, the burden of this great sin, hereditary and national, is on your shoulders. You may make thousands of reform societies, twenty thousand political assemblages and such other institutions, but there is no hope for us. These will be of no use until there is that sympathy, that love, that heart, that thinks for all,—until Buddha's heart comes once more into India, until the words of Lord Krishna are brought to their practical use, there is no hope for us. You go on imitating the Europeans and their societies and assemblages, but let me tell you a story, a fact that I saw with my own eyes. A company of Burmans was taken over to London by some persons here, who turned out to be Eurasians. They exhibited these people in London, took all the money and then took these Burmans over to the Continent, and they left them there for good or evil. These poor people did not know a single word of any European language. The English Consul in Austria sent them over to London. They were helpless in London, without knowing anyone. But an

English lady got to know of them, took these foreigners from Burma into her own house, gave them clothes, bed, and everything else, and then sent the news to the newspapers. And, mark you, the next day the whole nation was, as it were, roused. Money poured in and these people were helped out and sent back to Burma. On this sort of sympathy are based all the political and other administrative institutions of the West ; it is the rock foundation of love, for themselves at least. They may not love the world ; they may be enemies all round in certain respects to some, but it goes without saying however, that there is in them a great love for their own people and for truth and justice and charity to the stranger at their door. I would be the most ungrateful man if I did not always tell you how wonderfully and how hospitably I was received in every country in the West. Where is that kind of heart here, to build upon ? No sooner do we start a little joint-stock company than we cheat each other, and the whole thing comes down with a crash. You talk of imitating them, and building as big a nation as they have. But where are the foundations ? Ours are only sand, and so what building we raise upon it comes down with a crash in no time. Therefore, young men of Lahore, raise once more that wonderful banner of Advaita, for on no other ground can you have that wonderful love, which sees the same Lord present in the same manner everywhere ; unfurl that banner of love and "Arise, awake and stop not till the goal is

reached." Arise, arise once more, for nothing can be done without renunciation. If you want to help others, your own self must go. Aye, in the words of the Christians—you cannot serve God and Mammon at the same time. *Vairāgya*, Renunciation, that is what we want. Your ancestors gave up the world for doing great things. But at the present time we have only men who give up the world to help their own salvation. Throw away every thing, even your own salvation, and go and help others. Aye, you are always talking bold words, but here is practical Vedānta before you. Give up this little life of yours for others. What matters if you die of starvation, you and I and thousands like us, so long as this nation lives. The nation is sinking, the curse of unnumbered millions is on our heads,—the millions, to whom we have been giving ditch-water to drink when they are dying of thirst and when the perennial river of life-giving water is flowing past, the millions, whom we allow to starve at sight of plenty, the millions to whom we have talked of Advaita and hated with all our strength, the millions against whom we have invented the doctrines of *Lokāchāra*, to whom we have talked theoretically, that all are the same, and all are the same Lord, without practising a little of it even. Aye, wipe off this blot of difference in thought and practice. "Arise and awake." What matters if this little life goes? Everyone has got to die, the saint as well as the sinner, the rich as well as the poor; the body never remains in per-

petuity for anyone. Arise and awake and be perfectly sincere. Our insincerity in India is awful. Steadiness of character is what we want what we want is character, that steadiness of character that makes a man cling on to a thing like grim death. "Let the casuists blame or praise, let Lakshmi come or go away, let death come now, or in a hundred years, the man of steadfast character never goes astray a step even from the path of right." Arise and awake, for the time is passing away and all our energies are being frittered away in vain talking. Arise and awake, let minor things and quarrels over little details and fights over insignificant doctrines be thrown aside, for here is the greatest of all works, the regeneration of the sinking millions. Mark, when the Mohammedans first came into India how many millions of Hindus were here: but to-day they have dwindled down to almost one-third of what they were before. As days pass by, there is the risk that they will become less and less till the whole disappear. And with them will disappear the marvellous ideas of which, with all their defects, they still stand as representatives, yes, even the doctrine of the Advaita that crest jewel of all spiritual thought. Therefore, arise, awake, and stretch out your hands to protect the spirituality of the world. And first of all, work it out for your own country. What we want here just now is not so much spirituality as a little of the bringing down of the Advaita into the material world. First bread and then religion. We stuff them too much with



**Give up  
weakness  
and feel for  
the masses  
of your  
country.**

religion when the poor fellows are starving. But dogmas will not satisfy the craving of hunger. There are two curses here, first, our weakness and secondly, our hatred for the masses of our country, our dried-up hearts. You may talk doctrines by the millions, you may have sects by the hundred ; aye, but they will be of no use until you have the heart to feel, and to feel for them as your Veda teaches you, to feel till you find them to be but parts of your own self, till you find that the poor and the rich, the saint and the sinner, all are but parts of the one Infinite whole which you call Brahman.

**Preach  
Advaita  
Vedanta to  
India and  
the world.**

Gentlemen, thus I have tried to place before you only a few of the most prominent points of the Advaita system. The time has come now when they should be carried out into practice, not only in this country but everywhere. The sledge-hammer blows of modern science are pulverising into powder the porcelain foundations of all Dualistic religions everywhere. It is not only here that the Dualists are torturing texts till they will extend no longer, for texts are not India-rubber ; it is not only here that they are trying to discover all sorts of ways to protect themselves but they are doing so still more in Europe and America. And this Advaitic idea will have to go from India even there, nay, it has already got there. Only we shall have to continue that and save their civilisations also. For, in the West, the old order of things is vanishing, giving way to a new order of things. The worship of gold, the worship of

Mammon, is vanishing. Their old system of religion though crude, was better than the modern system of chase after mere material prosperity which has been elevated to the place of religion with them now. No nation, however strong, can stand on such foundations, and the history of the world tells us that all that had similar foundations are dead and gone. Therefore we shall have to stop the in-coming of such a wave of materialism in India, and shall have to preach the Advaita to every one, so that religion may withstand the shock of modern science. And not only so, but we shall have to help other nations as well ; we shall have to help out Europe and America from their groove of materialism. Let me remind you once more, that here is practical work for us, and the very first part of that is to go down to the sinking millions of India and to take them by the hand, remembering the words of Lord Krishna :—

“Even in this life they have conquered heaven whose minds are firm fixed in this sameness, for God is pure and the same to all ; therefore, such alone are said to be living in God.”

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## APPENDICES.

COMPRISING EXTRACTS AND VERSIONS OF CERTAIN  
OTHER SPEECHES DELIVERED BY THE SWAMI.



A  
**THE INFLUENCE OF INDIAN SPIRITUAL  
THOUGHT IN ENGLAND.**

The Swami presided at a meeting at which the Sister Nivedita (Miss M. E. Noble) delivered a lecture on "The Influence of Indian Spiritual Thought in England," on the 11th March, 1898, at the Star Theatre, Calcutta. Swami Vivekananda on rising to introduce Miss Noble spoke as follows :—

LADIES AND GENTLEMEN,

When I was travelling through the Eastern parts of Asia, one thing especially struck me, that is the prevalence of Indian spiritual thought in Eastern Asiatic countries. You may imagine the surprise with which I noticed written on the walls of Chinese and Japanese temples, some well-known Sanskrit Mantras, and possibly it will please you all the more to know, that they were all in old Bengali characters, standing even in the present day, as a monument of missionary energy and zeal displayed by our forefathers of Bengal.

Apart from what we find in these Asiatic countries, the work of India's spiritual thought is so wide-spread and unmistakable that even in Western countries, going deep below the surface, I found traces of the same influence still present. It has now become a

historical fact that the spiritual ideas of the Indian people travelled towards both the East and the West in days gone by. Everybody knows now how much the world owes to India's spirituality, and how potent a factor in the present and the past of humanity have been the spiritual thoughts of India. I find another most remarkable phenomenon at present and that is, that civilisation and progress of humanity have been greatly advanced by that wonderful race—the Anglo-Saxon. I may go further and tell you that had it not been for the power of the Anglo-Saxons we should not have met here to-day to discuss, as we are doing, about the influence of our Indian spiritual thought. And coming back to our own country, coming from the West to the East, I see the same Anglo-Saxon power working here with all its defects, but retaining its peculiarly characteristic good features; and I believe that at last a grand result will be achieved through it. The British idea of expansion and progress is forcing us up, and let us remember, that the civilisation of the West has been drawn from that of the Greeks, and that the great idea of Greek civilisation is that of *expression*. In India, we *think*--but unfortunately sometimes we think so deeply that there is no power left for expression. Gradually therefore, it came to pass that our force of expression did not manifest itself before the world. And the result was that we got into the habit of hiding everything we had. It began first as a habit with certain individuals and then ended by becoming

a national habit, the consequence being, there is such a lack of power of expression with us today that we are now considered a dead nation. Without expression, how can we live? The backbone of Western civilisation is—expansion and expression. This side of the work of the Anglo-Saxon race in India to which I draw your attention, is calculated to rouse our nation once more to express itself—and is inciting it to bring out its hidden treasures before the world by using the means of communication provided by the same mighty race. The Anglo-Saxons have created a future for India, and the space through which our ancestral ideas are now ranging is simply phenomenal. Our forefathers had great facilities when they delivered their message of truth and salvation, as for instance, when Buddha preached the noble doctrine of universal brotherhood. There were then great facilities here, in our beloved India, for the realisation of religion and we could easily send our ideas from one end of the world to the other. Now we have got the same facilities, and even greater, through the agency of the Anglo-Saxon race. An interchange of thought is now going on, and we find that our message is heard, and not only heard, but responded to. Already England has given us some of her great intellects to help us in our mission. And to-day in Miss Margaret Noble, we have one such, from whom we expect much. So, without any more words of mine I introduce to you Miss Noble, who will now address you.



After Sister Nivedita had finished her interesting lecture, the Swami rose and said :—

I have only a few words more to say. We have an idea, that we, Indians, can also do something for the betterment of the world, my Bengalee brothers may laugh at this idea, but I do not. My mission in life is to rouse a struggle in you. Whether you are an Advaitin, whether you are a qualified-Monist or Dualist, it does not matter much. Only let me draw your attention to one thing which unfortunately we always forget, that is, that we must have faith in ourselves. That is the way by which we can have faith in God. Whether you are an Advaitist or a Dualist, whether you are a believer in the system of Yoga or a believer in Sankaracharya, whether you are a follower of Vyasa or Visvamitra, it does not matter much, but you must have faith in yourselves. Let us remember for a moment that, whereas in every other religion and in every other country, the power of the soul is entirely ignored—the soul is thought of as almost powerless, weak, and inert, we in India consider the soul to be eternal, and hold that it will remain perfect through all eternity. We should always bear in mind the teachings of the Upanishads in this respect.

Remember your great mission in life. We Indians, and especially those of Bengal, are overrun with foreign ideas that are eating into the very vitals of our national religion. Why are we so backward now-a-days? Why are ninety-nine per cent. of us

made up of entirely foreign ideas and elements? These have to be thrown off if we want to rise in the scale of nations. If we want to rise, we must also remember that we have many things to learn from the West. We should learn from the West her arts and her sciences. From the West we have to learn the sciences of physical nature, while on the other hand, the West has to come to us to learn and assimilate religion and spiritual knowledge. We Hindus must believe that we are the teachers of the world. We have been clamouring here for political rights and many other such things. Very well ; rights and privileges and other things can only come through friendship ; and friendship can only be expected between two equals. When one of the parties is a beggar, what friendship can there be? It is all very well to speak so, but I say that without mutual co-operation we can never make ourselves strong men. So, I must call upon you to go out to England and America, not as beggars but as teachers of religion. The law of exchange must be practised to the best of our power. If we have to learn from them the ways and methods of making ourselves happy in this life, why, in return, should we not give them the methods and ways that would make them happy for all eternity? Above all, work for the good of humanity. Give up the so-called boast of your narrow orthodox life. Death is waiting for every one, and mark you this—the most marvellous historical fact—that all the nations of the world have to sit down patiently at the

feet of India to learn the eternal truths embodied in her literature. India dies not. China dies not. Japan dies not. Therefore, we must always remember that the backbone of our national life is spirituality. If any of you do not believe it, if there be a Hindu boy amongst us who is not ready to believe that his religion is pure spirituality, I do not call him a Hindu. I remember in one of the villages of Cashmere, while talking to an old Mohammedan lady, I asked her in a mild voice, "What faith is yours?" She replied in her own language, "Praise the Lord! By the mercy of God, I am a Musalmân." And then I asked a Hindu, "What is your faith?" He plainly replied—"I am a Hindu." This puts me in mind of that grand word of the Katha Upanishad—"*Shraddhâ*," or intense faith. To preach the doctrine of *Shraddhâ* or genuine faith, is the mission of my life. Let me repeat to you that this faith is one of the potent factors in the making up of humanity, and of all religions. First, have faith in yourselves. Know that one may be a little bubble and another may be mountain-high wave, but behind both the bubble and the high wave, there is the infinite ocean always. Therefore, there is hope for every one. There is salvation for every one. Every one must sooner or later get rid of the bonds of Maya. This is the first thing to believe. Infinite hope begets infinite aspiration. If that faith comes to us, it will bring back our national life as it was in the days of Vyasa and Arjuna—the days when all our sublime doctrines of spiritua-

lity were practised. Today we are far behind in spiritual insight and spiritual thoughts. India had plenty of spirituality, so much so that her spiritual greatness made her the greatest nation of the then existing races of the world ; and if traditions and hopes are to be believed, those days will come back once more to us, and the bringing of that depends upon you. You, young men of Bengal, do not look up to the rich and great men who have money. The poor did all the great and gigantic work of the world. You poor men of Bengal, come up, you can do everything, and you must do everything. Many will follow your example, poor though you are. Be steady, and, above all, be pure and sincere to the backbone. Have faith in your destiny. You, young men of Bengal, you are to work out the salvation of India. Mark that, whether you believe it or not. Do not think that it will be done to-day or to-morrow. I believe in it as I believe in my own body and my own soul. Therefore, my heart goes out to you—young men of Bengal. It depends upon you who have no money ; because you are poor, it is you who will work. Because you have nothing, therefore, you will be sincere. Because you are sincere, you will be ready to renounce all. That is what I am just now telling you. Once more I repeat this to you. This is your mission in life, this is my mission in life. I do not care what philosophy you take up ; only I am ready to prove here that throughout the whole of India, there runs a mutual and

cordial string of eternal faith in the perfection of humanity, and I believe in it myself. And let that faith be spread over the whole world.

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## B

### SANNYASA : ITS IDEAL AND PRACTICE.\*

This is not the time for a long lecture. But I shall speak to you in brief about a few things which I should like you to carry into practice. First, we have to understand the ideal, and then, the methods by which we can make it practical. Those of you who are Sannyasins must try to do good to others, for Sannyasa means that. There is no time to deliver a long discourse on 'Renunciation,' but I shall very briefly characterise it as "*the love of death.*" Worldly people love life. The Sannyasin is to love death. Are we to commit suicide then? Far from it. For suicides are not lovers of death, as it is often seen that, when a man trying to commit suicide fails, he never attempts it for the second time. What is this love of death then? We must die, that is certain ; let us die then for a good cause. Let all our actions—eating, drinking, and everything that we do—tend towards the sacrifice of our self. You nourish your body by eating. What good is there in doing that if you do not hold it as a sacrifice to the well-being of

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\* A parting Address was given to Swamiji by the junior Sannyasins of the Math (Belur), on the eve of his leaving for the West for the second time (19th June, 1899). The above is the substance of Swamiji's reply.

others? You nourish your minds by reading books. There is no good in doing that unless you hold it also as a sacrifice to the whole world. It is right for you that you should serve your millions of brothers rather than aggrandise this little self. Thus you must die a gradual death. In such a death is heaven, all good is stored therein—and in its opposite, is all that is diabolical and evil.

Then as to the methods of carrying the ideals into practical life. First, we have to understand that we must not have any impossible ideal. An ideal which is too high makes a nation weak and degraded. This happened after the Buddhistic and the Jain reforms. On the other hand, too much practicality is also wrong. If you have not even a little imagination, if you have no ideal to guide you, you are simply a brute. So we must not lower our ideal, neither are we to lose sight of practicality. We must avoid the two extremes. In our country the old idea is, to sit in a cave and meditate and die. But to go ahead of others in salvation is wrong. One must learn sooner or later, that one cannot get salvation if one does not try to seek the salvation of his brothers. You must try to combine in your life immense idealism with immense practicality. You must be prepared to go into deep meditation now, and the next moment you must be ready to go and cultivate these fields (Swamiji said, pointing to the meadows of the Math). You must be prepared to explain the difficult intricacies of the Shastras now and the next moment to go and sell

the produce of the fields in the market, as well. You must be prepared for all menial services, not only here, but elsewhere also.

The next thing to remember is, that the aim of this Institution is to make men. You must not merely learn what the Rishis taught. Those Rishis are gone, and most of their opinions have become things of the past. You must be Rishis yourselves. You are also men as much as the greatest men that were ever born—even your Incarnations. What can mere book-learning do? What can meditation do even? What can the Mantras and Tantras do? You must stand on your own feet. You must have this new method—the method of man-making. The true *man* is he who is strong as strength itself and yet possesses a woman's heart. You must feel for the millions of beings around you, and yet you must be strong and inflexible, and you must also possess obedience ; though it may seem paradoxical—you must possess these apparently conflicting virtues. If your Superior orders you to throw yourself into a river and catch a crocodile, you must first obey and then reason with him. Even if the order be wrong, first obey and then contradict it. The bane of sects, especially in Bengal, is that if any one happens to have a different opinion, he immediately starts a new sect, he has no patience to wait. So you must have a deep regard for your *Sangha* (order). There is no place for disobedience here. Crush it out without mercy. No disobedient members here, you must turn them out.



There must not be any traitors in the camp. You must be as free as the air, and as obedient as this plant and the dog.

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## C

### WHAT HAVE I LEARNT?\*

( DELIVERED AT DACCA, MARCH, 1901. )

First of all, I must express my pleasure at the opportunity afforded to me of coming to Eastern Bengal, to acquire an intimate knowledge of this part of the country, which I hitherto lacked, in spite of my wanderings through many civilised countries of the West. I must express as well my gratification at the sight of majestic rivers, wide fertile plains, and picturesque villages in this part of my own country of Bengal, which I had not the good fortune of seeing for myself before. I did not know that there was everywhere in my country of Bengal—on land and water—so much beauty and charm. But this much has been my gain, that after seeing the various countries of the world I can now much more appreciate the beauties of my own land. In the same way also, in search of religion, I had travelled among various sects,—sects which had taken up the ideals of foreign nations as their own, and I had begged at the door of others, not knowing then that in the religion of my country, in our national religion, there was so much beauty

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\* Substance translated from a report in Bengali.

and grandeur. It is now many years since I have found Hinduism to be the most perfectly satisfying religion in the world. Hence, I feel sad at heart when I see existing among my own countrymen with a peerless faith, such a widespread indifference to our religion,—though I am very well aware of the unfavourable materialistic conditions in which they pass their lives, owing to the diffusion of European modes of thought in this, our great motherland.

There are among us, at the present day, certain reformers who want to reform our religion, or rather turn it topsy-turvy, with a view to the regeneration of the Hindu nation. There are, no doubt, some thoughtful people among them, but there are also many who follow others blindly and act most foolishly, not knowing what they are about. This class of reformers are very enthusiastic in introducing foreign ideas into our religion. They have taken hold of the word 'idolatry,' and aver that Hinduism is not true, because it is idolatrous. They never seek to find out what this so-called 'idolatry' is, whether it is good or bad ; only they make capital out of this word and boldly shout down Hinduism as untrue. There is another class of men among us who are intent upon reading slippery scientific explanations into any and every Hindu custom, rite, and such other, and are always talking of electricity, magnetism, air vibration and all that sort of thing. Who knows, but they will perhaps someday define God Himself as nothing but a mass of electric vibration ! However, Mother bless

them all ! She it is who is having Her work done in various ways through multifarious natures and tendencies.

In contradistinction to these, there is that ancient order, who say,—“I do not know, I do not care to know or understand all your hair-splitting ratiocinations ; I want God, I want the Atman, I want to go to that Beyond, where there is no universe, where there is no pleasure or pain, where dwells the Bliss Supreme” ;—who say, “I believe in salvation by bathing in the holy Ganges” ;—who say, “Whomsoever you may worship with singleness of faith and devotion as the one God of the universe, in whatsoever name and form, as Shiva, Rama, Vishnu, &c., you will get *Moksha*” ;—to that sturdy ancient order of men I am proud to belong. Then there is a sect who advise us to follow God and the world together. They are not sincere, they do not express what they feel in their hearts. What is the teaching of the Great Ones ?—“Where there is Rama, there is no *Kāma*, as there Rama is not. Night and day can never exist together.” The voice of the ancient sages proclaim to us that, “If you desire to attain God, you will have to renounce ‘*Kāma-Kāanchana*’ (lust and possession). This Samsāra is unreal, hollow, void of substance. Unless you give it up, you can never reach God, try however you may. If you cannot do that, own that you are weak, but by no means lower the Ideal. Do not cover the festering corpse with roses !” So according to them, if you want to gain spirituality, to attain God,

the first thing that you have to do is to give up this playing 'hide-and-seek with your ideas,' this dishonesty, which has been aptly expressed in our Bengali as: 'theft within the chamber of thought,' "भावेर चदे चुरि।"

What have I learnt? What have I learnt from this ancient sect? I have learnt this that—

दुर्लभं नयनिवेतत् दिवानुपहरेतुकम् ।

मनुष्यत्वं मुमुक्षुत्वं महापुरुषसंनयः ॥

"Verily, these three are rare to obtain, and come only through the grace of God—human birth, desire to obtain *Moksha* or Salvation, and the company of the great-souled ones." The first thing needed is *Manushyatvam*, human birth, because that only is favourable to the attainment of *mukti* or liberation. The next is *Mumukshutvam*. Though our means of realisation vary according to the difference in sects and individuals,—though different individuals can lay claim to their special rights and means to gain knowledge, which vary according to their different stations in life,—yet it can be said in general without fear of contradiction, that without this *Mumukshutva*, realisation of God is impossible. Now what is *Mumukshutvam*? It is the strong desire for *Moksha*, total liberation,—earnest yearning to get out of the sphere of pain and pleasure of this world. When that intense burning desire to see God comes, then you should know that you are entitled to the realisation of the Supreme.

Then another thing is necessary, and that is the coming in direct contact with the Mahâpurushas, the great-souled ones, and thus moulding our lives according to them who have reached the goal. Even disgust with the world and a burning desire for God are not sufficient. Initiation by the Guru is necessary. Why? Because it is the bringing of yourself into connection with that great source of power, which has been handed down through generations, from one Guru to another, in uninterrupted succession. The devotee must seek and accept the Guru or spiritual preceptor, as his counsellor, philosopher, friend and guide. In short, the Guru is the *sine qua non* of progress in the path of spirituality. Whom then shall I accept as my Guru? श्रीविद्योद्भवाजिगीषुमानन्दो यो ब्रह्मविदः। "He who is versed in the Vedas, is without moral taint, and unhurt by desire, and has realised the Brahman perfectly." *Shrotriya* is he who is not only learned in the Shâstras, but who knows their subtle secrets, who has realised their true import in his life. "Reading merely the various scriptures they have become only parrots, and not Pandits. He indeed has become a Pandit who has gained Prema (Divine Love) by reading even one word of the Shâstras." Mere book-learned Pandits are of no avail. Now-a-days, everyone wants to be a Guru; it is just like a poor beggar wanting to make a gift of a lakh of Rupees! Then, the Guru must be *Akamahata*, without the least touch of any desire,—he should have no other motive except that of purely doing good to others,

he should be as the ocean of mercy and not impart religious teaching with a view to gain name, or fame, or anything pertaining to selfish interest. And he must be one who has realised the Brahman, even as tangibly as "an Amalaka-fruit in the palm of the hand."—Such is the Guru. When spiritual union is established with such a Guru, God-vision becomes easy of attainment.

After initiation, there should be in the aspirant after Truth, *abhyāsa*, or earnest and repeated attempt at practical application of the Truth by the prescribed means of constant meditation upon the chosen Ideal. Even if you have a burning thirst for God, or have gained the Guru, yet unless you have along with it the *abhyāsa*, unless you practise what you have been taught, you cannot get realisation. When all these are firmly established in you, then you will reach the Goal.

Therefore I say unto you, as Hindus, as descendants of the glorious Aryas,—do not forget the great ideal of our religion—the great ideal of the Hindus,—which is, to go beyond this Samsāra,—not only to renounce the world, but to give up heaven too ; aye, not only to give up evil, but to give up good too ; and thus to go beyond all, beyond this phenomenal existence, and ultimately realise the "Sat-Chit-Anandam Brahman"—the Absolute Existence-Knowledge-Bliss, which is Brahman

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### THE RELIGION WE ARE BORN IN.\*

( DELIVERED AT DACCA, 31ST MARCH, 1901. )

In the remote past, our country made gigantic advances in spiritual ideas. Let us, to-day, bring before our mind's eye that ancient history. But the one great danger in meditating over long-past greatness is, that we cease to exert ourselves for new things, and content ourselves with vegetating upon that by-gone ancestral glory, and priding ourselves upon it. We should guard against that. In ancient times, there were, no doubt, many Rishis and Maharshis, who came face to face with Truth. But if this recalling of our ancient greatness is to be of real benefit, we too must become Rishis like them. Aye, not only that, but it is my firm conviction that we shall have to be even greater Rishis than any that our history presents to us. In the past, signal were our attainments,—I glory in them and I feel proud in thinking of them. I am not even in despair at seeing the present degradation, and I am full of hope in picturing to my mind of what is to come in the future. Why? Because I know, the seed undergoes a complete transformation, aye, the seed as seed is seemingly

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\* A translation from the Bengalee report of a disciple.



destroyed, before it develops into a tree. In the same way, in the midst of our present degradation lies, only dormant for a time, the potentiality of the future greatness of our religion, ready to spring up again, perhaps more mighty and glorious than ever before.

Now let us consider what are the common grounds of agreement in the religion we are born in. At first sight we undeniably find various differences among our sects. Some are Advaitists, some are Visishtadvaitists, and others are Dvaitists. Some believe in Incarnations of God, some in Image-worship, while others are upholders of the doctrine of the Formless. Then, as to customs also, various differences are known to exist. The Jâts are not outcasted even if they marry among the Mohammedans and the Christians. They can enter into any Hindu temple without hindrance. In many villages in the Punjab, one who hesitates to eat pork will hardly be considered a Hindu. In Nepal, a Brâhman can marry in the four *Varnas*, castes ; while in Bengal, a Brâhman cannot marry even among the sub-divisions of his own caste. So on and so forth. But in the midst of all these differences we note one point of unity among all Hindus, and it is this, that no Hindu eats beef. In the same way, there is a great common ground of unity underlying the various forms and sects of our religion.

First, in discussing the Scriptures, one fact stands out prominently that only those religions which had one or many Scriptures of their own as their basis,

advanced rapidly and survive to the present day notwithstanding all the persecution and repression hurled against them. The Greek religion, with all its beauty, died out in the absence of any Scripture to support it ; but the religion of the Jews stands undiminished in its power, being based upon the authority of the Old Testament. The same is the case with the Hindu religion, with its Scripture, the Vedas, the oldest in the world. The Vedas are divided into the Karma-kanda and the Jnana-kanda. Whether for good or for evil, the Karma-kanda has fallen into disuse in India, though there are some Brâhmans in the Deccan, who still perform *Yajnas* now and then with the sacrifice of goats ; and also we find here and there, traces of the Vedic Kriyâ-kanda in the Mantras used in connection with our marriage and Shrâddha ceremonies, &c. But there is no chance of its being rehabilitated on its original footing. Kumarilla Bhatta once tried to do so, but he was not successful in his attempt.

The Jnana-kanda of the Vedas comprises the Upanishads and is known by the name of Vedanta, the pinnacle of the Srutis, as it is called. Wherever you find the Acharyas quoting a passage from the Srutis, it is invariably from the Upanishads. The Upanishads are now the scriptures of the religion of the Hindus. If any sect in India wants to have its ideas established with a firm hold on the people, it must base them on the authority of the Upanishads. They all have to do it, whether they are Dvaitists

or Advaitists. Even the Vaishnavas have to go to the Gopālatāpani Upanishad to prove the truth of their own theories. If a new sect does not find anything in the Srutis in confirmation of its ideas, it will go even to the length of manufacturing a new Upanishad, and make it pass current as one of the old original productions. There have been many such in the past.

Now as to the Vedas, the Hindus believe that they are not mere books composed by men in some remote age. They hold them to be an accumulated mass of endless Divine Wisdom, which are sometimes manifested or at other times unmanifested. Commentator Sāyanācharya says somewhere in his works, “यो वेदेभ्योऽस्मिन् जगत् निर्जने।”—“Who created the whole universe out of the knowledge of the Vedas.” No one has ever seen the compiler of the Vedas, and it is impossible to imagine one. The Rishis were only the discoverers of the Mantras or Eternal Laws ; they merely came face to face with the Vedas, the Infinite mine of knowledge, which has been there from time without beginning.

Who are these Rishis? Vātsāyana says,—“He who has attained through proper means the direct realisation of Dharma, he alone can be a Rishi, even if he is a *Mlechchha* by birth.” Thus it is that in ancient times, Vasishtha born of an illegitimate union, Vyāsa, the son of a fisherwoman, Nārada the son of a maid-servant with uncertain parentage, and many others of like nature, attained to Rishihood. Truly

speaking, it comes to this then, that no distinction should be made with one who has realised the Truth. If the persons just named, all became Rishis, then, O ye Kulina Brahmanas of the present day, how much greater Rishis you can become! Strive after that Rishihood, stop not till you have attained the goal, and the whole world will of itself bow at your feet! Be a Rishi,—that is the secret of power.

This Veda is our only authority, and everyone has the right to it. “वधेना वाचं ब्रह्मवीजानवदानि जनिष्यः । ब्रह्मराजब्रह्मा गृध्राय चार्वाय च न्याय चारवाय” ॥ “Since the word herein uttered may abound with immense beneficial issues not only towards the Brahmin and the Kshatriya but equally as much towards the Vaisya and the Sudra, towards one’s own friend as well as enemy even,” says the *Sukla Yajur Veda*. Can you show any authority from this Veda of ours, that everyone has not the right to it? The Puranas, no doubt, say, that a certain caste has the right to such and such a division of the Vedas, and that a certain caste has no right to study them, and that a certain portion of the Vedas is adapted for the *Satya Yuga* alone and that a certain other portion is for the *Kali Yuga* only. But, mark you, the Veda does not say so ; it is only your Puranas that do so. But can the servant dictate to the master? The Smritis, Puranas, Tantras—all these are acceptable only so far as they agree with the Vedas ; and wherever they are contradictory, they are to be rejected as unreliable. But now-a-days we have put the

Puranas on even a higher pedestal than the Vedas ! The study of the Vedas has almost disappeared from Bengal. How I wish that day may soon come, when in every home the Veda will be worshipped together with the Sâlagrâma, the household Deity, when the young, the old, and the women will begin to worship the Veda !

I have no faith in the theories advanced by Western Savants with regard to the Vedas. They are to-day fixing the antiquity of the Vedas at a certain period, and again to-morrow, upsetting it and bringing it one thousand years forward, and so on. However, about the Puranas, I have told you that they are authoritative only in so far as they agree with the Vedas, otherwise not. In the Puranas we find many things which do not agree with the Vedas. As for instance, it is written in the Puranas that some lived ten thousand years and some others again, twenty thousand years, but in the Vedas we find—**अतावुर्वे पुरुषः** :—"Man lives, indeed, a hundred years." Which are we to accept in this case? Certainly the Veda. Notwithstanding statements like these, I do not depreciate the Puranas. They contain many beautiful and illuminating teachings and words of wisdom on Yoga, Bhakti, Jnana, and Karma ; those, of course, we should accept. Then there are the Tantras. The real meaning of the word Tantra is Shâstra, as for example, Kâpila Tantra. But the word Tantra is generally used in a limited sense. Under the sway of kings who took up Buddhism and preached broad-

cast the doctrine of *Ahimsā*, the performances of the Vedic *Yāga Yajnas* became a thing of the past, and no one could kill any animal in sacrifice, for fear of the king. But subsequently amongst the Buddhists themselves—who were converts from Hinduism—the best parts of the *Yāga Yajnas* were taken up, and practised in secret. From these sprang up the Tantras. Barring some of the abominable things in the Tantras, such as the *Vāmāchara* &c., the Tantras are not so bad as people are inclined to think. There are many high and sublime Vedantic thoughts in them. In fact, the Brāhmana portions of the Vedas were modified a little, and incorporated into the body of the Tantras. All the forms of our worship and the ceremonials of the present day, comprising the Karma-kanda, are observed in accordance with the Tantras.

Now let us discuss the principles of our religion a little. Notwithstanding the differences and controversies existing among our various sects, there are in them too, several grounds of unity. First, almost all of them admit the existence of three things—three entities—Ishvara, Atman, and the Jagat. Ishvara is He who is eternally creating, preserving and destroying the whole universe. Excepting the Sāṅkhyas, all the others believe in this. Then the doctrine of the Atman, and the re-incarnation of the soul; it maintains that innumerable individual souls having taken body after body, again and again, go round and round in the wheel of birth and death according to their res-

pective Karmas ; this is *Samsāra* or as it is commonly called, the doctrine of re-birth. Then there is this Jagat or universe, without beginning and without end. Though some hold these three as different phases of one only, and some others, as three distinctly different entities, and others again in various other ways, yet they are all unanimous in believing in these three.

Here I should ask you to remember that Hindus, from time immemorial, knew the Atman as separate from Manas, mind. But the Occidentals could never soar beyond the mind. The West knows the universe to be full of happiness, and as such, it is to them a place where they can enjoy the most ; but the East is born with the conviction that this Samsāra, this ever-changing existence, is full of misery, and as such, it is nothing, nothing but unreal, not worth bartering the soul for its ephemeral joys and possessions. For this very reason, the West is ever especially adroit in organised action for what they call social uplift ; and so also, the East is ever bold in search of the mysteries of the internal world for the realisation of self.

Let us, however, turn now to one or two other aspects of Hinduism. There is the doctrine of the Incarnations of God. In the Vedas we find mention of *Matsya Avatāra*, the Fish Incarnation only. Whether all believe in this doctrine or not is not the point ; the real meaning, however, of this *Avatāra-vāda* is the worship of Man,—to see God in man is

the real God-vision. The Hindu does not go through Nature to Nature's God,—he goes to the God of man through Man.

Then there is Image-worship. Except the Five Devatās who are to be worshipped in every auspicious Karma as enjoined in our Shāstras, all the other Devatās are merely the names of certain states held by them. But again, these five Devatas are nothing but the different names of the one God only. This external worship of images has, however, been described in all our Shāstras as the lowest of all the low forms of worship. But that does not mean that it is a wrong thing to do. Despite the many iniquities that have found entrance into the practices of image-worship as it is in vogue now, I do not condemn it. Aye, where would I have been, if I had not been blessed with the dust of the holy feet of that orthodox, image-worshipping Brāhmana!

Those reformers who preach against image-worship, or what they denounce as idolatry,—to them I say,—Brothers! if you are fit to worship God-without-Form discarding any external help, do so, but why do you condemn others who cannot do the same? A beautiful large edifice, the glorious relic of a hoary antiquity has, out of neglect or disuse, fallen into a dilapidated condition. accumulations of dirt and dust may be lying everywhere within it; may be, some portions are tumbling down to the ground. What will you do to it? Will you take in hand the necessary cleansing and repairs and thus restore the old,



or will you pull the whole edifice down to the ground and seek to build another in its place, after a sordid modern plan whose permanence has yet to be established? We have to reform it, which truly means to make it ready or perfect by necessary cleansing and repairs, not by demolishing the whole thing. There the function of reform ends. Do that if you can, if not, hands off. A band of reformers in our country want, on the contrary, to build up a separate sect of their own. They have, however, done good work; may the blessings of God be showered on their heads! But why should you, Hindus, want to separate yourselves from the great common fold? Why should you feel ashamed to take the name of Hindu, which is your greatest and most glorious possession? This national ship of ours, ye children of the Immortals, my countrymen, has been plying for ages, carrying civilisation and enriching the whole world with its inestimable treasures. For scores of shining centuries this national bark of ours has been ferrying across the ocean of life, and has taken millions of souls to the other shore, beyond all misery. But to-day it may have sprung a leak and got damaged, through your own fault, or whatever cause, it matters not. What would you, who have placed yourselves in it, do now? Would you go about cursing it and quarrelling among yourselves, or would you not all unite together and put your best efforts to stop the leak? Let us all gladly give our hearts' blood to do it; and if we fail

in the attempt, let us all sink and die together, with blessings and not curses on our lips.

And to the Brāhmans I say, Vain is your pride of birth and ancestry. Shake it off. Brāhmanhood, according to your Shâstras, you have no more now, because, you have for so long lived under *Mlechchha* kings. If you at all believe in the words of your own ancestors, then go this very moment and make expiation by entering into the slow fire kindled by *Tusha* husks, like that old Kumârilla Bhatta, who with the purpose of ousting the Buddhists first became a disciple of the Buddhists and then defeating them in argument became the cause of death to many, and subsequently entered the *Tushânala* to expiate his sins. If you are not bold enough to do that, then admit your weakness and stretch forth a helping hand and open the gates of knowledge to one and all, and give the down-trodden masses once more their just and legitimate rights and privileges.

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